New Statesman

25 April 1986 90p IR£1.47 US$1.50 By Air

SPECIAL
Life in Wolverhampton

MAY 16 1986
AMBASSADOR COLLEGE LIBRARY
Display Copy

ON THE SKIDS

LIBYA: Outcry against the bases
JOHN JUDAS: US liberals cheer Reagan

SHORT STORY: Kathy Acker

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They chose us for the same reasons you should.

Since 1977, Redesign Print has been providing a specialist design and print service to charities and voluntary organisations.

There are several very good reasons why they chose us.

We are uniquely geared to your needs with an empathetic appreciation of your budgets and schedules.

We design and produce any printed matter to the standard you would expect from a highly expensive London graphic studio — for only a fraction of the price.

We have all the facilities needed to ensure your campaign is successful — from design of logos to the implementation of the complete identity.

Above all, we were chosen because there is no other company with the expertise, understanding and experience needed to deal with non-commercial organisations.

We were chosen because we are really the only choice. Our reputation demands this and our success confirms it.

If you would like more information about how we can help you design, print and publicise your organisation, simply phone Ian Franklin or Lesley Thelwell on 01- 533 2631 or write to us at the address below.

Redesign Print

9 LONDON LANE LONDON E8 3PR

GET *NEW STATESMAN* FREE FOR FOUR WEEKS

If you're not already a subscriber we'll send you the *New Statesman* FREE for an extra four weeks when you take out a subscription on this form. You'll be saving at least £5 a year on the cost of buying the *New Statesman* in the shops, and if you pay by credit card you can get the whole thing wrapped up with one 'phone call. It'll make you wonder why you waited so long.

Please tick appropriate box:

	1 year	6 months	4 months
UK & Eire	£37.00 ☐	£18.50 ☐	£12.35 ☐
Europe (Airmail)	£41.00 ☐	£20.50 ☐	£13.70 ☐
USA (Airspeed)	US$62.00 ☐	US$31.00 ☐	US$20.70 ☐
(Airmail)	US$83.00 ☐	US$41.50 ☐	US$27.70 ☐
Canada (Airspeed)	Can$72.00 ☐	Can$36.00 ☐	Can$24.00 ☐
(Airmail)	Can$97.00 ☐	Can$48.50 ☐	Can$32.35 ☐
Rest of the world (Airspeed)	£41.00 ☐	£20.50 ☐	£13.70 ☐
(Airmail)	£52.00 ☐	£26.00 ☐	£17.35 ☐

Name_____

Address_____

_____ Postcode_____

Payment Options
(please tick)

☐ I enclose my cheque/postal order for £.....,

☐ Please charge my credit card number

☐ Access ☐ Visa ☐ American Express ☐ Diners Club

Expiry date_____

Signed_____

Date_____

☎ To place your order by telephone call 01-253 2001 with your credit card details.

Return to *New Statesman* Subscriptions, FREEPOST, London EC1B 1EB.
No stamp is needed if posted in the UK.

EY1

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New Statesman

Cover drawing: Francis Boyle

Thatcher's nasty fall
Reagan's attack on Libya is proving to be a Falklands Factor for him but it has pushed Thatcher further down the slippery slope. IAN WALLER on her downhill journey 10

HOME

Peter Kellner: Freedom, Fairness and Fighting back 9
Paul Martin interviews a Libyan terrorist 12
Simon Head: Decay in the Black Country 13

FOREIGN

John Judis: US liberals rejoice with Reagan 17
Donald Sassoon: Italy's Communists search for new friends and concrete policies 19

BOOKS

Geoff Dyer: Peter Fuller's journals 25
Naomi Mitchison: Margaret Cole 26
Brendan Cleary: Poem 26
Gillian Wilce: New fiction 26
Joan Smith: Crime fiction 27
Peter Forbes: Peter Medawar's memoirs 28

ARTS

Adam Mars-Jones: *Caravaggio* 29
Benedict Nightingale: Theatre 30
Donny O'Rourke: Records 30
Charles Fox: Ragtime 31
John Spurling: Art 32
Naseem Khan: Work in progress on trade union links with culture 33
Hugo Williams: Television 33

BACKCHAT

Bill Greenwell: Health paranoia 34
Weekend competition 34
Crossword 35

PLUS

Scrutiny: Hilary Wainwright 8
Mediawatch: Paul Foot 15
Slump 15
Diary: Claudia Wright 16
Letters 20
John Minnion 20
Roger Woddis 24
Janis Goodman 39
Chess: George Botterill 39
This England 39

NEXT WEEK

THAT SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

For 40 years, British governments have traded British Sovereignty for the fanciful belief that a 'special relationship' with the USA would temper American excesses. But from Korea to Libya, the Americans have done exactly what they want. GWYN PRINS lays down the principles for a new relationship

COMMUNITY ROMANCE

Community politics — who can be against it? MARY CHAMBERLAIN for one, especially when it's combined with feminism to confine politics to the parish

STEPPING OUT

Dartington's dance community is exploring ways of opening the art to those without formal training: STEPHANIE JORDAN visits

IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST

Anthony Burgess suggested in his review of Jeffrey Meyers's new biography of Hemingway that it supplanted the previous 'standard' work; DAVID MONTROSE takes a somewhat different view

A DIFFERENT LEAGUE

Despite the clichés, rugby league isn't just a northern phenomenon: HUW RICHARDS takes a look at its southern face

New Statesman

Vol 111 No 2874 25 April 1986

Freedom and fairness for the People's Party

IF LABOUR wins the next election with an overall majority of working proportions, the pundits can look back to April 1986 as a milestone in the Party's fortunes.

By convention, an Opposition needs to be far further ahead than Labour currently in the opinion polls in order to allow for the normal swing back to the government in the late stages. But times aren't normal, politically speaking.

Since the 1983 election, the two Alliance parties have been facing right and cutting into the Tory vote, whereas before 1983 the Social Democrats and the Gang of Four defectors from the Labour Party were an actual and even greater potential threat to the Labour vote.

Also, one forgets quickly, the Labour Party that lost the 1983 election (and of which Neil Kinnock became leader just two and a half years ago) was in *such* a state of organisational, political and moral shambles that it clearly still has room for further recovery on all points. And now the Tory Party, for internal reasons that have nothing much to do with the effectiveness or otherwise of the official Opposition, is caught up in a jangling crisis of self-confidence.

Even the Tory press has come to the conclusion that the Prime Minister has lost what touch she had, is on the skids, is now 'accident prone' (that unanalysable political quality that is nonetheless so quickly and unforgivingly recognised by the political pros).

The Tory Party now has the feel of a party that will find it almost impossible to re-establish a front of unity and purpose so long as Mrs Thatcher remains leader. A party where the middling figures and all the senior figures with unspent ambition are obviously and daily positioning themselves for the post-Thatcher succession is a party that Mrs Thatcher will find it increasingly impossible to unify even for an election. The Westlands Affair at the start of the year demonstrated openly how she was losing her grip, but the great British public (rightly) did not think that Westlands was a very big political or industrial issue. The Libya bombing is something different. The overwhelming majority of the country (natural Tories included) knows that what was done was unwise or illegal or both. It knows, too, that it was the outcome of decades of toadying to Washington by British governments — and that Mrs Thatcher is now incapable of any other foreign policy attitude.

So the launch this week of Labour's own 'manifesto' for the next election could not have been better timed. Militant described it as an 'unecessary facelift', which is presumably exactly the kind of endorsement from that quarter that Neil Kinnock would have himself chosen. Its presentation and style are light years ahead of anything the Labour Party has managed to get together before. And *style* is important because of what it says about the political message.

Style, however, is *not* the same thing as the message. So long as the Kinnock campaign team were just thinking tactically in terms of how to maximise the Labour vote next time, but did not deep down think that there was any real chance of having an overall majority, then a policy of concentrating on not kicking 'own goals' was understandably as important as doing anything else. Finding a language which could recapture for Labour its natural political concepts, like freedom and and fairness, or law and order, from the mouths of the hard-faced free marketeers of the Right is critical.

But if one day this side of June 1988 Neil Kinnock is going to wake up in No. 10 with only his Labour colleagues and the civil service

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New Statesman

Applications are invited for the editorship of the **New Statesman**, which will become vacant when the present editor, Hugh Stephenson, leaves in the summer.

Those interested should write to:

The Company Secretary
New Statesman
14-16 Farringdon Lane
London EC1R 3AU

Applicants should provide a CV and may, if they wish, also send in a brief outline of their ideas for the magazine under their editorship. Those who are included on any shortlist for interview will be asked at a later stage to put in a fuller paper setting out their proposals.

Closing date for applications:
Friday, 23 May 1986

WEST MIDLANDS
ENTERPRISE BOARD LTD

Since 1979 the West Midlands economy has been devastated.

* 225,000 jobs in manufacturing industry have been lost
* Unemployment has risen threefold
* 2 in 5 people have been reduced to living on the breadline.

West Midlands Enterprise Board was set up as part of a comprehensive and highly successful strategy to restore prosperity to the shattered economy through building on the products of local industries and the skills of working people.

The strategy includes badly needed investment funds to enable firms to develop and expand, development of worker co-operatives which enable people to create and control their own jobs, provision of training to provide high quality skills for the future and campaigns to fight poverty which should be seen as a major element of any economic strategy.

West Midlands Enterprise Board has demonstrated that there is a clear alternative to the misery and waste of unemployment, poverty and industrial decline and will play an expanding role in rebuilding the West Midlands economy.

West Midlands Enterprise Board, Lloyds Bank Chambers, Edmund Street, Birmingham B3 3HD Tel: 021-236 8855

between him and his manifesto commitments, potent political language will not be enough. If, for example, this country is ever going to move towards a 'free and fair' housing policy on housing, a new government will have to address itself directly to the squalor of much public housing where tenants pay above economic rents in relation to privately owned housing where the tax concessions are such that many people over the last few decades have made more money by sitting on their houses than they have by working.

The ad men and the pollsters no doubt say that to raise such issues will dangerously rock Labour's pre-election boat; and that Labour should stick to 'pavement' politics of the kind that once served Liberals so well. The alternative answer is that with the 'Freedom and Fairness' campaign Labour has launched something that will serve very well between now and the election. The policy soil in which it is all rooted, though, is still dangerously thin. □

Excellent news from Norman Tebbit

GROUND RULE of Conservatism: avoid open *talk* about the agenda called 'permissive'. The whole aim of, shall we say, the *Daily Telegraph* readership is to keep a decent veil of obscurity over the traditionally awkward truths of life.

DT readers, though, being human and obliged to live in the 1980s, know that their daughters have abortions, their children grow up gay, their relatives get divorces, their offspring start single-parent families, they snort and shoot up . . . *c'est la vie.*

The art of Conservative politics is to let it be supposed that only Lefties have little local difficulties in the family — and to refrain from whistling up the wind over the true state of affairs, in both senses of that last word, in the suburbs and the shires.

Norman Tebbit is, therefore, making a political mistake with his escalating attempt to pin the nation's woes on liberalising legislation in the 1960s. (In the process, he is injecting a deeply unpleasant and McCarthyite tone in British politics.) His 'anti-permissive' card is certain to backfire at the Tory grass-roots. It is as much a political misjudgement as his leader's misjudgement about her shire supporters' notions on Sunday trading or bombing Tripoli.

Take the Queen as Tory exemplar in this week of her 60th birthday. She likes to start the morning with the *Daily Telegraph* crossword puzzle, so the paper informed its readers last week. Her personal bodyguard, it will be recalled, was discovered to be gay a few years ago and she was 'understood' to be dismayed at having him removed from her. A few days ago she had him back as a guest at a private function at the Palace. To put it briskly, women at least know you can't throw 'black sheep' out of the family or there'll be no family. Her own sister is divorced . . .

From HM's drawing room to the sitting rooms of Tebbitland itself (Chingford, Essex) it is respectability which stands to suffer most from Tebbit's efforts to scoop votes out of incitement to a 'moral backlash'. Tory voters may be supposed to long for a past fairy-tale world of social conformity and discipline, which the Tory chair preposterously attributes to the 1950s — so do many who vote for the other parties. But the grass-roots won't welcome rattling of the skeletons they all have.

What we are actually witnessing, following the Prime Minister's folly *as a party political leader* of abolishing Ken Livingstone's oratorical platform, is Norman Tebbit's desperate effort to recreate a 'Livingstone factor'. Some Tory might be wise to whisper in Tebbit's ear that it was to cut back blackmail of the middle classes, as well as out of civilised sentiment, that homosexuality was (partially) decriminalised in 1967. He now seems inclined to regret that advance. It was supported at that wiser moment by Mrs T. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LAST TIME A PM SAID 'NO' HE GOT HIS WRIST SLAPPED

TED HEATH WAS RIGHT to say last week that he had prevented the United States using British airfields in Cyprus during the 1973 Yom Kippur war. But Heath did not tell the House of Commons that US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger then ordered that Britain be punished for its non co-operation, reports DUNCAN CAMPBELL
Research Patrick Forbes

WHEN HEATH refused the Americans the opportunity to mount U-2 spy plane and other missions from Cyprus, Henry Kissinger's reaction was quick and vengeful. The 25-year-old intimate Anglo-American intelligence-sharing arrangements were suspended forthwith.

GCHQ and M16 were suddenly cut off from all American intelligence supplies. Links were not restored for a week, probably the most serious rupture in intelligence relations since Suez.

Ministry of Defence officials have refused to discuss the American response to Heath's 1973 veto.

But the hitherto secret intelligence cut-off was not even the most serious incident affecting Anglo-American relations during the Yom Kippur war. That occurred early on the morning of Friday 25 October 1973, when US bases throughout the world were suddenly ordered to prepare for nuclear war. Neither Britain nor any other NATO ally was consulted.

On that day, US nuclear forces already on 'quick reaction alert' were ordered to 'DEFCON 2' — Defense Condition 2, or full readiness for war (war itself being, in effect, DEFCON 1). Every US military unit was ordered to at least DEFCON 3. But key nuclear bases in Britain, such as Lakenheath and Upper Heyford, were among those ordered to a full DEFCON 2 alert.

By the time most European governments knew about the war alert, however, American viewers were watching film of these military preparations on breakfast TV.

A special message about the alert, hours afterwards, sent to the British Ambassador in Washington. Because of the 'special relationship', therefore, the British government was informed over breakfast, while the rest of NATO had to wait until lunch. By late afternoon (in Europe), Henry Kissinger was openly threatening global nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union, and spoke, in an ominous televised press conference, of possible Soviet 'unilateral action ... involving incalcuable consequences'.

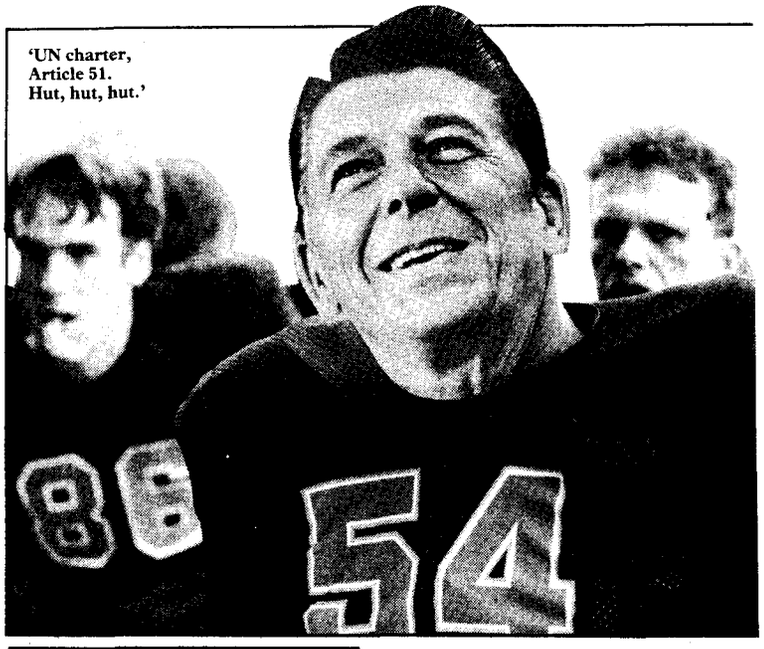
US Defense Secretary James Schlesinger later admitted that no-one in NATO was consulted about this 'signal' to the USSR. There was, in fact, no 'joint decision about the use of US bases in the light of the circumstances prevailing at the time' — the phrase that successive British governments say gives them control of the US bases in crisis.

Come off it, Neil

Apart from Kissinger's slap on the wrist, Heath's revelations about his Cyprus veto were misinterpreted last week as indicating that similar arrangements apply in Britain. They don't. Unlike US Air Force bases in Britain, which are wholly occupied by and under the sole operational control of the US Air Force, the Cyprus bases are owned and run by the RAF.

When Heath said 'no' to the use of Cyprus, the US could only have gained the use of the bases by open physical assault. The opposite situation applies in Britain.

Labour leader Neil Kinnock claimed on Thursday that the course of the Yom Kippur war demonstrated that the UK has 'adequate control' of US bases in Britain. Kinnock's view that adhering to the Labour Party's non-nuclear policy while doing our bit for NATO requires nothing more than the temporary evacuation of nuclear weapons from Upper Heyford's bomb dump, or the warheads from the Greenham Common missiles, is no more satisfactory.



'UN charter, Article 51. Hut, hut, hut.'

By the end of the decade, only a minority of NATO members will have United States nuclear bases, or nuclear-capable aircraft, on their territory. Eight of 16 NATO nations — Norway, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Iceland and Canada — have already purged any US nuclear bases they may have once permitted. Greece will join this group in 1989. Most of these nations have already followed policies that today's Labour leadership would regard as crazily radical. Canada has opted for complete unilateral nuclear disarmament; Norway, Denmark, Luxembourg, and Portugal (other than on the Azores) permit no foreign military presence in peacetime.

If the Labour Party cannot now face that sort of stance, it must face the urgent need for a proper treaty with the United States which will control the use of the bases for unilateral, non-NATO activities. ●

Ecumenical bullets

FEW EVENTS better illustrated the changes in Northern Ireland's political life than last week's funeral of the first Protestant, after so many Catholics, to have been killed by a police plastic bullet. The ritual was all there: silent angry crowd, political spokespersons flushed with denunciations queueing to carry the coffin, and later the riots.

But when the previous 12 plastic bullet deaths brought charges that the 90 per cent Protestant Royal Ulster Constabulary often fired wildly or at innocent victims there was routine Unionist derision. What kind of 'innocents' stood around while rioters attacked the forces of law and order, they asked? And who but IRA fellow-travellers, eager to undermine the police, would criticise methods of riot control?

Keith White was shot in Portadown during a Protestant *riot, however, and the RUC was showered with bricks and breeze blocks while implementing the policy of symbolic impartiality the Anglo-Irish Agreement has fashioned for it — re-routing triumphalist marches away from Catholic districts. Hey presto: Unionist calls for a judicial inquiry and an end to the use of plastic bullets. 'Well, we couldn't accept the allegations of militant Republicans, you see', said one more honest than others, 'and we had no previous experience of these things ourselves'. Indeed.*

Fionnuala O Connor

The Real Reason

WHY AMERICANS don't understand the idea of self defence.

American foreign policy can only be explained in terms of the US national sport. The key to the attack on Libya is that the Defense in American football is the team with all the really heavy players, whose aim is to do as much physical damage as possible to the other team, known as the Offense. Last season's hero was 25-stone *defensive* back William 'The Refrigerator' Perry.

This makes Article 51 predictably hard for Americans to grasp. Defence, to the average redneck, means hitting your opponent hard before he sees the ball. Self defence means doing it your*self*.

Technical note: Partly through historical accident, and partly because of the national culture, American football developed out of rugby football by dropping two rules in the early part of this century.

In rugby you're only allowed to tackle the player with the ball; American footballers can 'block' any opponent. In rugby the ball can only be thrown backwards; in America a forward pass is allowed, and restrictions on it were dropped in 1974 — *in order to make for better television.*

The result, apart from the expensive (and for the legs ineffective) protective equipment, is that the Defense rush at the Offense, knocking them out of the way to get at the player with the ball before he makes the crucial forward pass, which takes the Offense closer to scoring.

(As well as providing a insight into US foreign policy, this will assist in understanding the next season on Channel Four in September.)

John Rentoul

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PEACE MOVEMENT WAS WRITTEN OFF TOO QUICKLY

The enthusiastic and quickly organised British response to the Libyan crisis confounded the *Guardian*'s Jean Stead and Hugo Young — too eager (14 and 15 March) to pronounce protest dead — and showed CND very much alive and able to channel a nationwide groundswell on what wasn't even strictly a nuclear weapons issue. JANE DIBBLIN reports

THE *Guardian*'s world-weary gloom may have been doing us a favour by provoking us into a response, in which case it should have claimed a victory instead of later attributing the misplaced remarks to 'newspapers' generally.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament *isn't* sluggish and constipated by bureaucracy; and massive anti-militarist sentiment only needs to be stirred into action by government complicity in American war-mongering (as over cruise missiles).

What's more, there was vindication for peace movement warnings that the flashpoints would be in the Third World. The Libyan strike also gave substance to fears that cruise missiles in Comiso, Sicily, are meant for the Middle East, and that US strategy is to set up a global network of Rapid Deployment Forces.

Saturday's march from CND's sit-down in Grosvenor Square to the rally in Hyde Park which spontaneously turned into a blockade of Oxford Street threw up — the by now not unusual — allegations of police violence. The turning point came when the police, who had seriously underestimated numbers, tried to drive a bus through the crowd.

It seems from eye-witness accounts that the protestors persuaded a London bus driver to stop trying to drive through and vacate his cab. When a police officer failed to start the bus himself, a hitherto 'demonstrator' showed him how. Which only goes to feed paranoia, wondering whose payroll *that* demonstrator was on.

Aggro

CND is compiling a dossier of incidents and personal identity numbers of police involved. One elderly Quaker woman, for example, reports being picked up by her neck and told: 'If you don't get up, we'll pull your head off.' CND national council member Pat Wilmet was told by a senior police officer: 'They're young, inexperienced and they panic.'

Edward (E.P.) Thompson, who, along with Dorothy Thompson was repeatedly dragged away and on occasions deliberately hurt, paid tribute to the 'maturity and calmness of the demonstrators in aggro-provoking circumstances'.

David Modell

Some police officers are 'young, inexperienced and they panic', a senior officer helpfully explained

It wasn't a rose garden, though, and CND's international committee chair, Jane Mayes, complained of a group of young men who cornered a policeman and set into him.

Demonstrators were relieved to find that American jubilation over the atrocities was not quite universal. The occasional self-proclaimed anti-Reagan American on the march was greeted with hugs and thanks and comments that they were 'brave'.

The protest has struck a chord in a wider audience. To supplement the national polls, local CND groups have not only organised regional protests but have also done their own 'market research'. Cumbrians for Peace, who polled 455 shoppers in Carlisle centre on Saturday last, found their results tallied closely with the *Telegraph*'s; 69 per cent of respondents thought Thatcher was wrong to allow the use of British bases. When asked for further detail, 73 per cent thought Britain's involvement made us less secure, 6 per cent more secure, 21 per cent saying it made no difference.

On the future of US bases (nuclear and non-nuclear not distinguished), 28 per cent said they should be closed, 22 per cent that they should be 'reduced' and 50 per cent that they should stay. ●

Peace Protests Roll Call (26)

Total arrested in UK and Eire since September 1981*: 10,287

Arrests to date by location

Faslane Peace Camp, near Helensburgh **18**
'Orange Action' at Coulport (17 February), 14 arrested and charged with criminal trespass, unauthorised entry and breach of the peace.
A 'Yellow Action' on 2 June (all invited) will blockade the construction site at the top of Peaton Hill to draw attention to work on Trident. For a list of companies involved send SAE and 25p (or more) to Faslane Peace Camp, below St Andrew's School, Shandon, near Helensburgh, Dumbartonshire.
Two arrested on Easter Sunday (30 March), on regular 'stroll' over Peaton Hill above Coulport base, and charged under new military by-laws. No notices had been posted telling walkers they came into effect on 5 February.
Two peace campers woken at night (early March) by local police and charged with previous trespass.

Ministry of Defence, Whitehall **15**
Christian CND candlelit vigil (14 April) in protest at the bulldozing of the Peace Chapel at Molesworth; 15 who refused to move on arrested and charged with trespassing and obstruction.

Molesworth USAF base, Cambridgeshire **58**
Two of seven base invaders (6 April) charged, one with obstructing the police, one with criminal trespass. Release of other five may confirm Ministry of Defence doesn't own the strip of land they climbed into.
After trying to plant crops inside security fence, 51 protestors arrested on Easter Monday (31 March) and charged with criminal trespass. Over 300 took part in the demo.

Greenham Common **6**
Five women arrested for paint, egg and blancmange throwing (application made to Olympic Committee) when US cruise missile convoy returned to base (18 March). Criminal damage. Man also arrested for painting peace symbols on police van.

Salisbury Plain, Wilts **3**
Three of Knowe and Totterdown CND arrested near missile convoy, held for three hours and released with caution (14 March).

Andover, Wilts **2**
Ian Lee arrested and charged with obstructing highway, protesting about convoy. His friend William Peden, trying to photograph arrest, was driven at by police motorcyclist and roughly arrested for obstructing a police officer (11 March). He's lodged a formal complaint.

National Snowball **16**
In all 777 people have joined escalating (1, 3, 9 . . .) fence-cutting protests. Of these 647 have been arrested. Of the 276 who took part in seven stages of the Snowball in North Norfolk 236 have been through the courts: total fines, costs and compensation came to £20,204. Many have refused to pay fines and 35 have served a total of 434 days in prison. Contact national Snowball co-ordinator Angie Zelter, Valley Farmhouse, East Runton, Cromer, Norfolk.
Recent arrests: six at Edzell USAF base, Scotland (charged with criminal damage), and 10 at RAF Corsham, Chippenham (released with caution), both 18/19 January.

● Former merchant seafarer Richard Crump of Ex-Services CND had a judge point at his war medals and ask 'What's that rubbish?' at Wallington magistrate's court in Croydon. Sentenced to 14 days in Pentonville for non-payment of fines from Molesworth Snowball, he was told to shut up and take his hands out of his pockets during the hearing. Although the judge later apologised a friend has made a complaint to Lord Hailsham.

Not counting last week's and last weekend's response to the Libyan attack. Details of arrests still coming in (see report above). More details to* **Janey Hulme *at the* New Statesman.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rejoice, rejoice

FOR THE FIRST time in six years the bookmakers think Labour is more likely to win the next General Election than the Conservatives. All three bookies who quote political odds now have Labour odds-on to be the largest party.

The Libyan factor has hit the Tories hard; Ladbroke and William Hill have put them back from odds-on favourites to evens, while uncertain Coral have them level pegging with Labour. The Liberal/SDP Alliance has slipped badly in the aftermath of the Fulham by-election. The combination of Westland, Fulham and Libya has boosted Labour's overall rating from the recent low of 33 per cent touched in December to a record 47 per cent.

Bookies aren't yet quoting odds on the two forthcoming by-elections.

John Rentoul

NS Tick-Tack Index 1985/86

	Jun	Sept	Dec	Mar	NOW
Tories	53	53	55	49	45
Labour	35	35	33	41	47
Lib/SDP	11	12	11	10	8

The score is the percentage probability of each party winning the most seats at the next election implied by the odds quoted by Ladbroke, William Hill and Coral.

Strikers? Lock 'em up

PRISON OFFICERS are an unlikely 'enemy within' to be the next to face this Scargill-crunching government. Since 1979 the party of law and order has quintupled capital spending on prisons and recruited 3,000 extra staff. With current levels of overtime, the average prison officer earns £15,000 a year.

But today the Conservatives' prison strategy lies in tatters. Openly urging the courts to lock up more for longer has meant a rise in the number of prisoners outstripping even the most pessimistic forecasts. Overcrowding remains at critical levels despite the 'building for the future' programme. And last year Home Secretary Leon Brittan was loudly barracked by delegates to the Prison Officers' Association conference.

Now, after imposing crude cash limits, a long industrial dispute in the prisons seems inevitable. Indeed, to prevent a total breakdown in the administration of justice, Douglas Hurd may well be forced to declare a desirable but for him politically embarrassing amnesty for petty offenders.

The origins of the present dispute aren't hard to trace. Labour's front bench isn't alone in waking up to the fact that there's no correlation between law and order spending and the rate of crime. The Treasury is also questioning whether the £670 million annual running costs are value for money. In order to protect its building programme, the Home Office has responded by closing 50 prison workshops, restricting remand prisoners' 'privileges', and most recently by cutting the budget for overtime. Calling in aid management's inalienable right to manage, the Home Office is trying to use the overtime cut as a wedge to enforce changes in working practices. This is in the full knowledge that the effect in the short-term will be to consign even more prisoners to 23-hour lock-up.

No one doubts that restrictive practices exist. But in addition to any criticism of Home Office industrial relations tactics (which would draw the admiration of Rupert Murdoch) it has to be said that the real blame for the waste and profligacy which characterises the prison system cannot be laid at the POA's door.

An excessive emphasis on security, a mis-match of resources between short-term and long-term jails, and a building programme of staggering incompetence are all the result of the Prison Department's own policies. The disastrous new Holloway, for example, requires twice as many staff as its predecessor. Repairs to the six-year-old prison at Wymott represent 70 per cent of the initial capital costs. Construction of a new top-security jail near York continues despite the Department's own admission that it is surplus to requirements.

So vastly increased spending has brought no improvements in conditions and opportunities for prisoners. While the first priority should be a reduction in Britain's wholly excessive reliance upon custody, it is interesting that an enforceable code of minimum standards of imprisonment is strongly supported by prison governors and the POA. It is equally vigorously opposed by the Home Office.

Stephen Shaw

Stephen Shaw is Director, Prison Reform Trust

MISCELLANY

War fever

'Sixth Fleet 5 Gadafy 0' reads a huge roadside sign in Kissimmee, Florida. If that isn't funny enough, wait for the punchline: 'GO TEAM GO.' J. A. Holm sends us a murky photo of this monument to American xenophobia. The gathering war clouds make it too dark to reproduce, but you get the message.

Anti-war fever

The RCP (stands for Middle Class Yoof for a Nice Revolution) with unerring instinct for a hot vote-winner has issued a press release to cash in on recent events. Its candidates in the 8 May local elections are campaigning

for their cities to be twinned with Libyan cities as a gesture of solidarity. Go team go.

On Monday

Two weeks ago we reported on the underhand way in which the US was trying to bring chemical weapons back to Europe for the first time in 20 years. Now, exploiting a flaw in the enabling legislation, the US is trying to get NATO approval for such a step some weeks earlier and at a much lower level than originally planned. Last week US ambassador to NATO, Donald Abshire, admitted in Congressional testimony that the *ministers*, meeting on 22 May, would simply 'note' the decision of the *ambassadors* on 28 April. For as Abshire so aptly put it: 'It just did not make sense to politicise the issue.'

Money for old rope

The Triumph of really popular capitalism continues. Our advice to sell Dixons should have netted Intermediate Technology a nifty 4 per cent on the millions you invested on their behalf. And even Britoil, that prodigal offspring, has returned to the fold with a 5.5 per cent profit, after some anxious moments when we at the Collection Can *nearly ran for our reputations. Flushed with success we re-enter the world of merger mania, and advise you to get hold of (trans: buy) as many Allied Lyons shares as your pocket deems advisable — Allied Lyons seems to have got its act together in the process of repelling Aussie predator Elders (proceeds to Alcoholics Anonymous).*

Helping hands

With a predicted blissful redesign by Neville Brody, design *couturier* to the Lefty press, *New Socialist*'s May issue hits the stalls next week. Editor Stuart Weir is hoping that besides pleasing the readers it'll excite Labour's National Executive as publishers into lifting the staff numbers. For close on two years the editorial, advertising and business task has effectively fallen on four — Weir himself, Anne Cesek, Stephen Pope, and Geoff Sheridan now departed — and it's been knackering. Request to the NEC: two more bods please.

Turn it down

The squabble over Live Aid goes on. *We* said (Miscellany 21 March) Lord Geldof offered it to Channel 4 whose John Cummins turned it down. *They* said (letter from chief exec Jeremy Isaacs by hand within hours) they didn't have access to simultaneous stereo radio as stipulated by St Bob. *He* says (Dave Jamieson, programme controller, Radio Tees, in this week's *Broadcast* magazine) independent radio could easily have carried stereo Live Aid. Wish we hadn't mentioned it.

Life's a bowl . . .

The pure and romantic new Derek Jarman movie Caravaggio *(sucks to you Winston Churchill Jnr) was preceded at this week's London benefit screening for Action against Aids by a two-minute short. You'd have loved it. Made by Royal College of Art film student Ken Butler it has Mrs Thatcher, played by Gaye Brown, giving a safer-sex talk from Downing Street, a bowl full of condoms at her side. Blowing one up, she carols 'it pays to slip into something that could save lives'. Come on Hayhoe, buy the rights for your lacklustre Aids information campaign.*

Egham on

Former Tory Runnymede mayor June Allen has hit out at the MCPs in her own party because Egham Constitutional Club, a Tory-run watering hole, bans women from membership. 'It's a Conservative Club and women who do most of the work for the party have every right to use it,' says Ms Allen in the local freesheet. Club president Kenneth Greenwood is reported as saying how grateful several members' wives are about the men-only rule 'as they know their husbands could not be drinking with women'. Loose lot, these Tories.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

25 DAYS OF QUANGOS

County Hall hasn't been sold, and Ken Livingstone is still working as an ILEA member, in his old room. But security staff have been told to tell people 'this is not a public building any more'. And the London Residuary Body for several days allowed only one open door — for over 10,000 people who work there. Until the GLC's abolition HILARY WAINWRIGHT was one of them. What's going on behind the closed doors?

FIRST, let's ask the crude question: who's getting what? Starting at the top, Sir Godfrey Taylor, already on a Water Board pension, gets £50,000 for a four-day week. He's responsible for 4,300 staff and a budget of £617 million. The GLC's Director General got £44,000 for a full working week and was responsible for 14,000 staff and a budget of over £1,000 million. But 'Tag' Taylor, as he is affectionately known, has been generous to his staff. Or rather to some of them.

Senior officers in the Residuary Body's administration, personnel, legal, finance and property disposal departments have with few exceptions been promoted. That is, the very group whom the advocates of abolition described as staffing an 'unnecessary tier of bureaucracy'.

On the other hand everyone in the *service* departments, for instance the Scientific Branch who do all sorts of things to safeguard Londoners' health and safety (monitoring noise, testing furniture for fire hazards, identifying pollution), remain in their old GLC posts and salaries. Perhaps they should be grateful. They could have been treated like the manual workers.

The LRB announced to the 770 manual workers that there would be no overtime and that the shift system would be reorganised. They faced a loss of around £30 a week in average earnings. But the manual staff worked to rule and won an agreement that average earnings would be maintained. But this agreement lasts for only three months.

Market farces

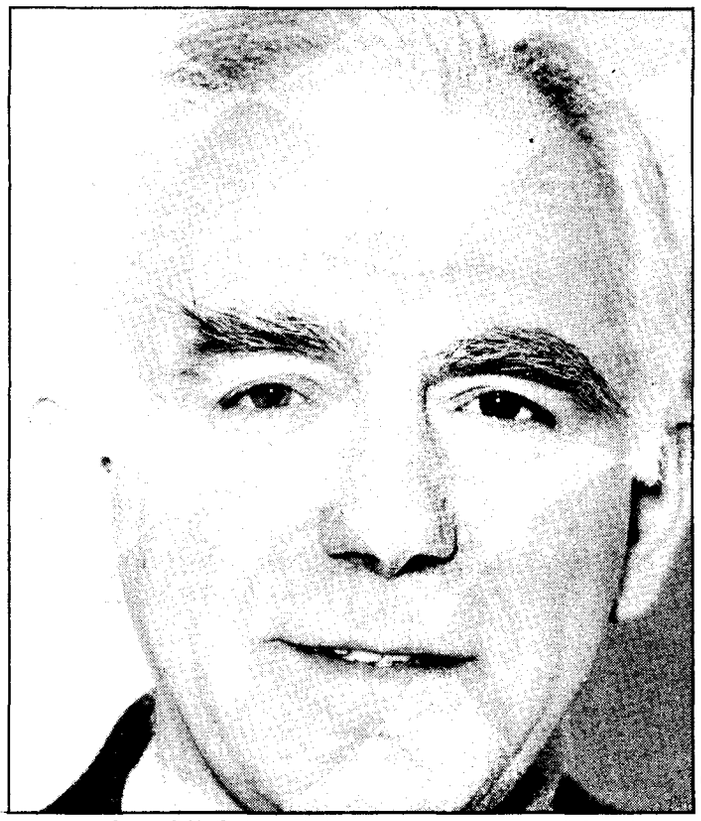
The differences in payment are a result of the market — a politically-constructed market — for different kinds of labour. In Thatcher's economy, managers, accountants, administrators are in high demand (through no fault of their own). Scientific experts like those in the GLC's Scientific Branch have their highest value as part of a team, with accumulated skills and experience. Individually they are not so freely marketable. While over a fifth of Finance Department staff left the GLC in the run-up to abolition, only eight scientists more than their normal turnover did the same. As for the manual workers, they are dispensable. Their services can be contracted in on a casual basis.

The same market principles apply down river at the LRB's neighbour just along the river: the South Bank Board. (What with these two, and the Docklands Development Corporation, the Thames Water Board and the Port of London Authority, the Thames has been renamed the River Quango.) At the South Bank Board it is on a grander scale, as befits a board made up of Lords, Ladies and company directors — the board of the LRB is mainly retired Town Clerks and men (literally) from the Water Board*. The South Bank Board is spending £275,037 a year on 12 new executives. These replace eight who cost the GLC £143,748. At the same time they privatised, in effect casualised, the work of 75 attendants, and downgraded the remaining 45. Their earnings have fallen from £218 a week to £140.

Another business person's board to benefit from abolition is the Thames Water Board. Thames Water is already a highly profitable business, making £149 million this financial year. With abolition it will add the Thames Barrier — for visiting which it intends to charge £1 a time — and all the river piers.

Roy Watts, the chairperson, has another connection with those piers. He is also vice chair of Brymon Airways, the main airline to run from the Docklands Stolport. The one new pier which the Water Board has said it intends to build is one to service the Stolport. The intention is that this would be linked by a river commuter service to central London, possibly to an expanded riverside development on the Embankment. One advantage of this is that the Stolport, and flying Brymon, would become a much more attractive prospect.

A spokesperson for the Water Board says: 'The Stolport area is a natural place for a pier. I must stress that the chairman is responsible for general policy development and not its execution.'



UPP

Who voted for you? Sir Godfrey Taylor, successor to our Ken of Blessed Memory

Boarded up

One thing that these boards have in common is their blatant lack of accountability. They are not elected and they work in secret. The Water Board, albeit not directly elected, used to include representatives from the boroughs and hold its meetings in public. In preparation for privatisation, all this was ditched in 1981 and a new 'streamlined' board was created, 'just like any other corporate business', boasted Roy Watts. It meets in secret. The consumer committee is chaired by a member of the board, and trade unionists who ask for information that would be elementary to a local authority — like the business interests of board members — are told 'it isn't necessary'.

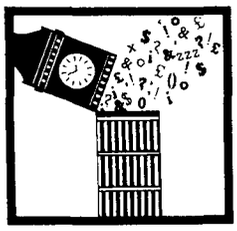
At another London quango, London Regional Transport, members of the London Regional Passenger Committee (also government-appointed) say that, although they've had an effect on LRT's policies in the past, for instance on routes and bus times, LRT is consulting them less and less seriously as privatisation gets underway.

At the Residuary Body, there's no question of consultation. The major sale will be of GLC property. This includes several prominent development sites bought by the GLC in response to community campaigns. One of these community groups is the North Southwark Community Development Group which has drawn up and partly fulfilled plans for housing and employment on the Courages site by the river, opposite St Paul's. They contacted the LRB valuer, to ask how they could influence the LRB's letting policy for the GLC's large industrial units on the site. 'We don't have policies. They are irrelevant. Our disposals are on a market basis,' he replied, adding: 'You can write me a letter. And I could put it to the Board.'

According to Sir Godfrey Taylor's office, the only people other than Board members who can see its minutes are Kenneth Baker and Lord Elton at the Department of the Environment. This Board took over from the completely open GLC on the same day, 1 April, that the Local Government Information Act became law. ●

*Members of the South Bank Board include Ronald Grierson, vice chair GEC, Sir Gordon Brunton, ex-President of International Thomson, Colin Marshall, Chief Executive of British Airways, Lord Rayne, Lord Weidenfeld, Lady Digby and Lady Harlech. They are appointed by Sir William Rees-Mogg, chair of the Arts Council, a director of GEC and a former employee of International Thomson. Members of the Residuary Body include Alan Blakemore, retired chief executive of Croydon, James Wolkind, retired chief executive of Tower Hamlets, and Jack Esling, retired personnel director of the Thames Water Authority. They are appointed by Environment Secretary Kenneth Baker.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Freedom, fairness and the sums that frighten Mrs Thatcher

PETER KELLNER

TWO WEEKS AGO Labour won the Fulham by-election. This week Labour launched its 'Freedom and Fairness' campaign. In two weeks' time the biggest test of electoral opinion will be held between now and the next general election. Throw in the disarray on the Conservative benches on Sunday trading and public hostility to Mrs Thatcher over last week's US bombing raid on Libya and you have Labour's best chance since the birth of the SDP to re-establish itself as a plausible alternative government.

Or, to put it another way, if Labour trips up this time, we might as well give up.

As I reported three weeks ago, Labour's by-election campaign at Fulham was easily its most professional and effective. The initial publicity material for 'Freedom and Fairness' shows that the progress is continuing. Those criticisms made after 1983, not least in the *NS*, about the bureaucracy and unimaginativeness of Walworth Road — so vehemently denied at the time — have at last yielded tangible changes.

It is instructive to compare Labour's 1983's 'Jobs and Industry' campaign with today's 'Freedom and Fairness'. J & I was wordy and worthy — and better than anything that had gone before — but ultimately fell between two stools. It was neither attractively packaged enough to speak to the wider electorate, nor politically coherent enough to satisfy many party activists. It was perfectly designed for shop stewards; or, rather, for shop stewards as they were thought to exist 20 years ago when they imparted their distilled political wisdom at branch meetings to union members apparently agog to comprehend the latest twist in Labour policy. As one of Labour's senior officials put it: 'We produced oceans of material, but most of it stayed in boxes'.

F & F cuts out the middleman — sorry, middleperson. The campaign is designed to reach electors directly. An obvious point, you might have thought, in an age when television and direct mail have replaced public meetings as means of communications. But for Labour the obvious has meant significant changes in the way the party functions.

First, Labour's policy projection has become more centralised than ever before. To some extent, it *has* been for many years, especially during general elections. But partly because of the incompetence of Labour's headquarters and partly because HQ was supposed to support rather than dictate to local parties, nationally produced material tended to be haphazard in organisation, quality and delivery.

(During the 1983 general election, I was one of a small group of advisers on the party's private polls. A meeting had been arranged for the Sunday before the election; but the meeting was cancelled on the Saturday evening. Nobody told the two outside members of the group — Andrew McIntosh and myself — so we arrived for our non-existent discussion. 'No matter', we were told, 'we're short-handed and a late election leaflet needs to be written: will you do it?' So we did — rather well, if I may say so. As far as I am aware, hardly any of these leaflets reached the voters.)

As Walworth Road has become more competent, so it has been able to take a more effective lead in directing the party's publicity. The normal modalities apply: the policies listed in the F & F campaign have all come up through resolutions, conference decisions and so forth. But the selection and wording of the policies put forward in F & F will almost certainly disappoint the dwindling band of party members who think that the precise wording of line 23 of the Composite resolution on National Toggle-waving policy should be presented to the electorate in its pristine state.

The second innovation flows from the first. By the very act of becoming more professional, F & F's launch material provides fewer words and greater coherence than anything that has gone before. A team of advertising agency people has worked voluntarily to help produce the material. Labour has used ad people before — but almost every time they have been ground down by the excessive and often conflicting demands of their political client.

MANY LABOUR members will be sceptical of the proposition that radical policies are best conveyed in the fewest possible words. But as any good copywriter (or, for that matter, journalist) will tell you, brevity can aid clarity. Two thousand-word statements on education or health or defence are likely to contain contradictions, evasions and woolly thinking: get it down to 50 words and you will have something that is either manifestly vacuous, or reaches the heart of the party's policy. Lengthy statements can, and should, remain available for those who want them; but the discipline of brevity is a political gain and not just a copywriter's obsession.

Take this statement of Labour's health policy from the F & F literature:

> More choice and more involvement for patients in health care, and greater emphasis on preventative health. Shorter waiting lists; a fully-computerised cervical cancer screening programme for all women; action on food additives.

Clear, precise and relevant. And after five years of Labour rule it will be clear whether Labour has delivered or not. If waiting lists are longer, or food additives not tackled, Labour will have no excuses. Brief statements like that do not permit cop-out subordinate clauses, which reduce the apparent pledge to nothing.

It will be some time before the impact of F & F can be measured — whether, indeed, voters even notice it. But at least Labour has a fair wind behind it at the moment. A first indication of the initial impact of Labour's new campaigning approach comes in just two weeks' time.

The local elections on 8 May will choose around 5,400 councillors. The first direct elections for the Inner London Education Authority will provide ILEA with 58 members — two from each of the 29 parliamentary constituencies in the ILEA area. There will also be a spate of by-elections held throughout the country on the same day. But, in the main, the elections will choose councillors who were last chosen in 1982 (or, in a few cases, 1983). All the local authority seats in the 32 London boroughs are up for election, as are all the seats in the 12 Scottish regional and island councils. In the remainder of England and Wales, where elections are being held, one third of district councillors are being chosen.

Ignoring subsequent changes in by-elections, this is what happened when the seats were last contested:

	Seats won			
	Con	Lab	Lib/SDP	Other
London	980	757	148	29
Met districts	284	455	90	12
Non-met districts	893	705	237	130
Scotland	110	186	26	189
Wales	9	46	4	11
TOTAL	2276	2149	505	371

(The Scottish 'others' include 23 SNP; the Welsh 'others' include 2 Plaid Cymru.)

Both 1982 — when the council elections were held in the middle of the Falklands War — and 1983 were good years for the Conservatives; so Tory losses are inevitable. On 8 May, the Tories would be doing well to contain their net losses to 400 or less. 5-600 losses would reflect the government's recent underlying unpopularity. Anything above 700 losses would be bad news for Mrs Thatcher. This would show that her party is in a deeper trough than pre-Libyan-bombing polls indicated. And if her party lost either the Ryedale or West Derbyshire by-elections on the same day, even she might start to doubt whether a third general election victory is inevitable. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NO, PRIME MINISTER

It was no Falklands. Far from raising the banner of 'British pride', bombing Libya was seen as an act of submission to an irrational foreign power — the USA. IAN WALLER examines its effect on the Prime Minister's shrinking party support

TORY MPs returned to Westminster last Monday in a distinctly chastened mood after a week-end in which Reagan's attack on Libya — and Mrs Thatcher's complicity in it — had been virtually the only talking point in the constituencies; an experience that rudely shattered their hopes — and reason for the backbench euphoria immediately after the announcement — that it would provide a new Falklands factor for their beleaguered leader and their own waning electoral prospects.

Nowhere was this more apparent than in politically sensitive East Anglia. The roar of US aircraft setting out on their mission had left a grim feeling of being in the front line in a war situation which, on Mrs Thatcher's own admission, she could have done nothing to stop. CND demonstrators suddenly seemed to have a point even to those normally hostile.

The parallel with Suez or the Falklands is wrong in every sense. Whatever else may be said about both, they were perceived as bold British initiatives evoking a sense of patriotism (particularly among the working class voters as I learnt only too well speaking at anti-war meetings in 1956). Both involved what were perceived as British interests and the Falklands at least proved a military success. An assault on terrorism might, in general, have been welcomed; had Gadafy been killed the dubious morality of the whole exercise could have been justified leaving Mrs Thatcher able to claim a heroine's role as Reagan's ally.

The gut instinct of the British people — reflected in the *Daily Telegraph* Gallup poll showing two out of three opposed it — proved more accurate than the Tory backbench emotionalism; even more significant and alarming for the Tory MPs should be the remarkable flood of letters the *Daily Telegraph* received supporting its critical line.

The crisis could scarcely have come at a worse moment for the Conservative Party — a week after the Fulham defeat at Labour's hands, the certainty of heavy local government losses on 8 May and the very real risk of losing the Derbyshire West by-election in face of a formidable Alliance challenge. Morale in the constituency parties is at rock bottom with even the staunchest loyalists bewildered as much by the general impression of the government's incompetence as its wrong headedness on so many issues. The only redeeming feature of last week for most Tory MPs was Mrs Thatcher's humiliating defeat over the Shops Bill which has spared them a repetition of last year's long and bitter committee stage on GLC abolition — and taken the heat off them in the constituencies. Few issues provoked such an angry response from normally loyal supporters.

There are all the tell-tale signs of malaise in the constituencies, a fall-off in contributions and, with the local election campaigning starting, a marked lack of enthusiasm to do the hard slog of canvassing and delivering leaflets. The more traditional the Tory area, the worse it is. Massive rate increases in the shire counties have made a mockery of the government's talk of reforming local government and curbing the rates bills; whatever Mrs Thatcher may say about spending more than Labour ever did on the NHS and education, the cuts and deteriorating services are there for all to see.

The effects of Nicholas Ridley's deregularisation of bus services are just beginning to be felt as the already modest rural bus services are disappearing altogether. Most Tory voters in the shires may have cars but the

Leon Kuhn

'We will see that Parliament and no other body stands at the centre of the nation's life and decisions.'

—— CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

village bus is a symbol of rural survival. Supporting the Alliance — particularly the Social Democrats — is now socially respectable and an added gall to the loyalists is to see their neighbours, particularly the younger middle class housewives, for so long the hard core of Tory voluntary workers, out canvassing against them.

IN THE MARGINAL seats the situation is even worse, particularly among the many that were unexpectedly won in 1983 as a result of the split in the anti-Tory vote between Labour and Alliance. With a general election now on the horizon scores of Tory MPs are thinking about life thereafter; their future careers and family finances now matter more than nursing constituences or preparing for a fight they fear is already lost. They were elected on a wave of support for Mrs Thatcher, they blame her for their prospective fate.

The problem in Smith Square is equally acute. Norman Tebbit is, of course, an immense improvement on Selwyn Gummer as party chairman. He has authority as a Cabinet minister, ability as an organiser and is personally popular and respected by Central Office staff. He has shunted the laughable Billy Graham evangelist, Harvey Thomas, into a siding and put the highly competent John Desborough into the key role of Director of Communications. He has limited Jeffrey Archer's activities to speaking to constituency meetings where his fame as a novelist rather than his political intelligence attracts large audiences. Whether that does the party any good is questionable; what is certain is that Michael Heseltine is an even bigger draw — and with a message ever more hostile to Mrs Thatcher and Thatcherism.

But the biggest problem for the hard nosed professional organisers is that Tebbit is equated in the public mind with Thatcher and she is now the party's biggest liability. Her rating in Gallup at 30 per cent has yet to touch the pre-Falklands low when she became the most unpopular premier since Gallup started sampling, but the slide is unmistakeable and probably irreversible. At Fulham, as in last year's by-elections, hostility to her personally was the most frequently expressed view on the doorsteps even among those still sympathetic to the Government.

The virtues she has been seen as possessing — courage, determination and single-mindedness — have been translated into arrogance, lack of caring and being out of touch. The string of disasters in the past few months — including Westland and BL — have undermined confidence in her competence and leadership while the spectacle of her trailing behind President Reagan over Libya and, still more, her confessed powerlessness to stop the use of British bases even if she had wished to can only do further damage. The party is increasingly seen as being divided, that very factor that has damaged Labour so much over the years. By contrast Neil Kinnock's position is steadily improving and the Tory's desperate attempts at Fulham to pin the extremist label on the party, and on Nick Raynsford in particular, rebounded badly.

At the heart of the distrust is the Government's failure to halt the rise in unemployment. Mrs Thatcher's claim to have curbed inflation was a powerful factor in 1983 and with it went a belief that she would tackle unemployment with the same determination in her second term of office. Instead, not only is it intolerably high but, given the broad consensus (including the wets in her own party) that it *can* be cut, the excuse that it is a worldwide phenomenon over which the government has no control is increasingly unacceptable. Worse still Mrs Thatcher gives no convincing impression of caring. The fall in inflation, on the other hand, means that it has now receded as a politically sensitive issue on which the government can crusade.

Mr Tebbit is showing signs of awareness of the Thatcher liability and distancing himself, and the party's propaganda line, from her. He made known his dissatisfaction over her handling of Westland and BL; he has been conspicuously silent about Libya while loyalist ministers were trying to drum up support over the weekend. But changing an image that epitomises Thatcherism at its most unacceptable is neither easy nor convincing, nor his advice to the unemployed to get on their bikes readily forgotten. The sheer crudity of his attacks on Labour, while doing Kinnock no harm, is precisely what the floating voter finds most offensive in the two party battle and is thus a source of strength to the Alliance in the seats where they are the biggest threat to the Conservatives.

Under Mrs Thatcher's leadership the character of the party has changed from its traditional broad base into a Poujadist type movement reflecting her own worst prejudices; resentful of those above and uncaring for those below. The professional classes feel increasingly unhappy in it (as well as outraged by the obscenely high earnings in the City) while the always significant element of working class Tories are deserting it as their standards decline and welfare services are eroded under a Government that has ceased to care. They fear for their children's futures in Mrs Thatcher's society. Dislike of trade union bosses and their past excesses has given way to fears of rights being undermined as the size of the votes for retaining trade union political funds graphically illustrated.

As a result, one of the strongest cards of the 1980 Conservative Party — its appeal across class — is being whittled away. The significance of Fulham was to underline the Alliance's failure to make inroads into the suburban and industrial working class vote (attracting it is the sole rationale of the Social Democrats' contribution to the essentially middle class Liberal Party). But perhaps the distinct middle class character of the Alliance is why the local elections and the Derbyshire West parliamentary by-election will show, I believe, that the erosion of middle class Conservative support to the Alliance is continuing. With Neil Kinnock steadily consolidating Labour's position, and the move of significant professional and middle class votes to the Alliance, there is a combined pincer movement on the Tory party that looks like continuing so long as Mrs Thatcher lasts. She shows no sign of going before the General Election. □

Ian Waller is political commentator on the Sunday Telegraph.

Students

SPECIAL

OFFER!

SAVE

£19

Students have always had a special deal from the *New Statesman*, but try this one for size. From 18 April the price of the *NS* in the shops will be going up to 90p *but* for a limited period we're holding the student subscription rates to their current level. So if you take out a year's sub now you'll be getting the *New Statesman* well into 1987 at 1984 prices. That saves £19 on what you would otherwise pay. Just fill in the form and return it with your payment. You're quids in.

Name_____

Address_____

_____

_____ Postcode _____

College _____

Course_____ Finishes_____

Type of subscription

	One year	6 months
UK & Eire	£28	£14
Europe	£31	£15.50
USA (Airspeed)	US$46	US$23
Rest of world (Airspeed)	£31	£15.50

If paying by credit card, please complete below or phone 01-253 2001 with your credit card details

Type of card (Visa/Amex/Access/Diners Club)_____

Number

Expiry date_____

Please charge my card for the sum indicated above.

Signed _____

Date _____

Return to Subscriptions Dept, New Statesman, FREEPOST, London EC1B 1EB (NO STAMP NEEDED IF POSTED IN THE UK)

Please note: Offer expires 31 May 1986. Payment can only be accepted in £ sterling or US dollars.

SS7

New Statesman

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A GADAFY LOYALIST'S OWN STORY

PAUL MARTIN in a rare interview with Omar Sodani, expelled from Britain

'HELLO, IT'S OMAR — back from the dead.' The man whom sections of Fleet Street had reported executed by Colonel Gadafy for the St James's Square incident in which WPC Fletcher was shot dead, was downstairs in the lobby of the Grand Hotel, Tripoli. The truth was that he had had to face a long grilling from Libyan security chiefs on why a policewoman had died, instead of the Libyan students they were aiming at. The operation was bungled and Britain unnecessarily angered - but he was very much alive.

For nearly two weeks, at regular meetings, I was able to gain a fascinating insight into the mind and activities of a man regarded as one of the Libyan Jamahiriya's leading terrorists. He hardly fitted the bill, if one expected the lean-bodied, sunken-cheeked, specimens seen regularly in the movies.

Omar Sodani was considerably plumper than when I had last met him in London. He spoke English with a slight accent and a wide vocabulary. He was a very poor swimmer, I discovered when we took to the pool one afternoon to escape the heat. He had a charming wife and two young children. In short, he was far too human to be a classic 'bad guy' of the unreal evil empire.

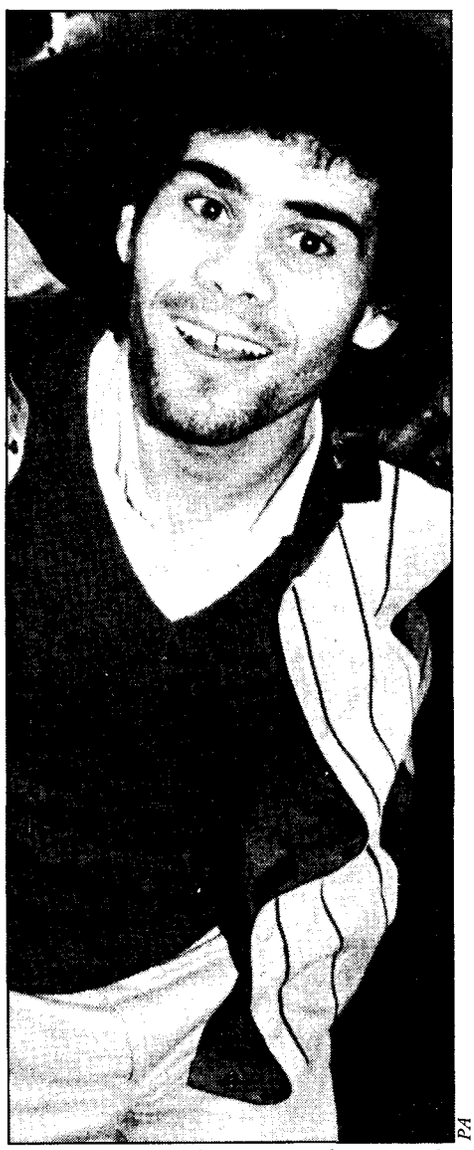
We had first met during the Libyan Peoples' Bureau siege, when he acted as an important link man in the negotiations. He must be excused direct complicity in WPC Fletcher's murder as he was under police custody at the time, arrested hours before when he went to protest at the proximity of police barricades to the Bureau's front door.

Sodani's role in London had been, firstly, to help overthrow the 'old order' inside the Libyan embassy and replace it with revolutionaries. That done, he acted as the Bureau's spokesman while nominally studying at the London School of Tropical Medicine which he hardly ever attended. Crucially, he co-ordinated student activities, living in a flat above the Student Union building in Kensington. All Libyan students here get government grants, but a good number of them are secretly opposed to Colonel Gadafy, and some are actively working through opposition groups for his overthrow. That was the case then and remains so now.

Sodani tried to discover who the closet rebels were, so they could be dealt with — sent home and, as often as not, killed. 'Stray dogs,' as Gadafy often used to say, 'must come home or be eliminated.' His four-year sojourn in Britain ended exactly two years ago, when he was expelled along with all those inside St James's Square.

How and why had Sodani become such an avid supporter of the Colonel, prepared to suppress his opponents by force if necessary?

Sodani owed Gadafy a great deal. As the son of a peasant family in Libya's Deep South (hence his name, indicating proximity to the Sudanese border), Omar would have been a goat-herder or at best a pen-pusher today were it not for the reform of the educational system instituted when the monarchy was overthrown and 'socialism' declared. Because of the free schooling even in remote areas, Sodani was able to get to Benghazi University, where he became head of the Students' Union. In that capacity, he was instrumental in the public hanging of two 'enemies of the people'. 'They were not opponents, they were traitors working for our foreign enemies,' he told me one day as we walked along Tripoli's beachfront, bedecked with green flags, the ubiquitous revolutionary colour. He felt 'no compunction, no guilt at all, only pride,' he said.



PA

Omar Sodani being bundled out of Heathrow in March '84

Having displayed his loyalty, he was soon highly regarded within the revolutionary committees whose role is to oversee the country's progress and purify it of any deviation and deviators. As he sees no role for an opposition at home he is equally convinced that there should be no Libyan opposition abroad. Fittingly, the targets of Libyan loyalists are not foreign enemies but their own dissidents — wherever they may live.

THIS IS NOT to say he delights in violence. As a medical doctor, he prefers to save life not take it. He has never, he says, actually shot anyone. Yet he would have no compunction about doing so in some circumstances. He felt 'very sorry' at WPC Fletcher's death, but as for the injuries sustained by the Libyan demonstrators in the Square: 'I would have shot half a dozen of them myself,' he told me.

To say he regards them as beneath contempt is an understatement. They had come abroad and were using other people's soil to conspire against their own country. They received protection from the British authorities. Demonstrators wishing to protest at any other embassy, he said, had never received such favours. In short, they were plotting against Libya and Libya had the right to self-defence, he asserted.

That was clearly a principle he applied throughout Europe. Little more than a year later Sodani was expelled from Belgium where he and some of the other leaders who had been at the St James's Square Bureau were running a similar 'student-watching' operation.

Sodani was in most respects a very rational man, whose views on the inequalities of the world many left-wing people would agree with. He regarded diplomacy as the apogee of hypocrisy, and urged that the conventions of diplomatic immunity and privilege be abolished. Libya would have allowed the police to search its Bureau for the supposed killer, he said, if Britain had agreed to abandon such conventions and allow similar access to the British Embassy in Tripoli. Hardly equivalent of course, since no-one had been shot from the British Embassy's window.

Sodani was still convinced that Libya's revolution had not gone far enough in purging old values. He was pleased that after the failed attack on Gadafy's barracks on 8 May 1984, Libyan revolutionaries had obtained more power, and were manifestly in control in the 'clean-up' operation that followed, in which many suspected traitors were rounded up.

Does this make him a terrorist? No, he would say, simply a man who believes the revolution is to be fought for all over the world not just on one's own soil. I very much doubt whether the Sodanis of this world would advocate the wholesale slaugther of innocents that a bomb on an aircraft would cause.

I do not know where Omar is now. He had asked me to get the School of Tropical Medicine to write to him a reference, as he was considering taking up occupational medicine to help alleviate third world disease. On the other hand, he said, the revolution might have need of him. I have little doubt that he is beavering away somewhere inside the bureau, or in some Libyan office — unless he was a victim of the American raids — plotting to keep the Jamahiriya safe and pure. □

Paul Martin is a writer and broadcaster specialising in the Middle East and Africa.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OUTGROWTHS OF DECAY IN THE HEART OF ENGLAND

Industry in Wolverhampton, as in the rest of the Black Country, was once the pride of the British economy. SIMON HEAD goes in search of the causes of its current decline — and of how local people are responding

ENOCH POWELL is not someone whose past should inspire much in the way of warmth or nostalgia — and least of all in Wolverhampton, the birthplace of his blighted career in the politics of race. But people in Wolverhampton still tell at least one story about Enoch Powell growing up in the Black Country which for them evokes something deeply felt about the region and its past.

It is said that as a young man Powell would set forth from home, climb to the top of one of the low hills which run along the western edge of the Black Country, and from there look out with awe upon the vast industrial panorama stretching out as far as he could see.

Powell is long gone from the West Midlands, but the view of the land from Sedgley Beacon is still a sight to be reckoned with. Today nothing can hide the pock marks of industrial decline: the rusting hulks of abandoned factories, the blighted land left behind once the remains of old factories have been cleared away. But though these derelict spaces scar the landscape, they don't yet dominate it. You can still look out on mile upon mile of factories, heaving with the din of production, and you can still feel the excitement which Powell must have felt 50 years ago. Today, however, it's an excitement mixed with apprehension, because those outgrowths of decay pose their own question. Do they represent the true growth industry of the Black Country which will in the end destroy those living organisms which still remain?

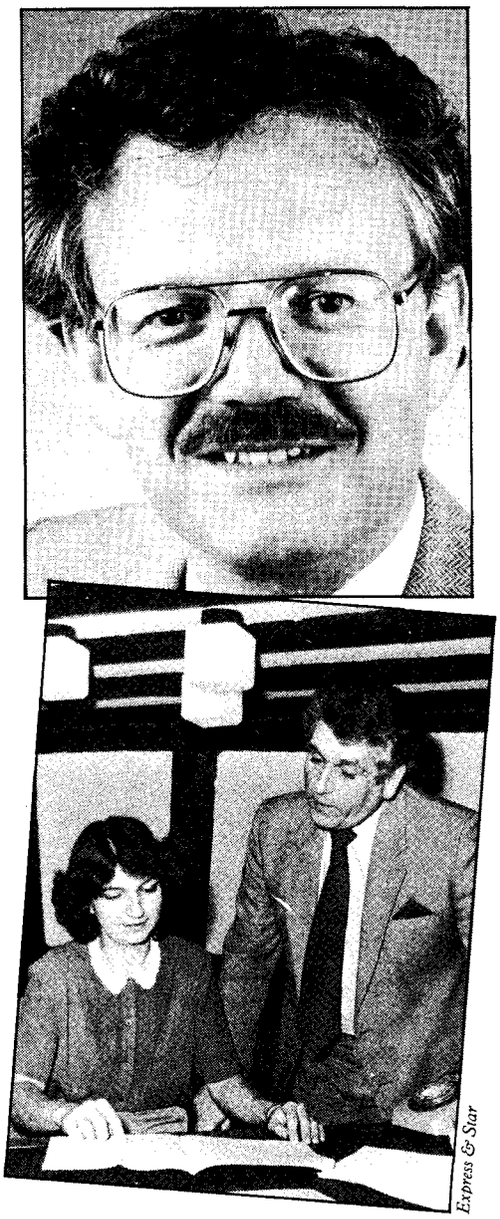
At first glance Wolverhampton does not look like a community in the throes of a great economic crisis. The prevailing imagery of urban decline is of a decaying inner city, surrounded by a ring of more prosperous suburbs. But in Wolverhampton, the worst areas of urban blight are to be found in the outer city. The 250 acres of derelict land left by the demolition of a British Steel works is at Bilston, in the southernmost suburbs. The industrial graveyard left by the disappearance of scores of smaller engineering works is at Wednesfield, well out to the north-east.

Inner city Wolverhampton, on the other hand, still has the appearance of a prosperous town in the south of England. There are two modern shopping centres, a fine new civic centre and, dotted along the ring road, an impressive array of high-rise office buildings.

This appearance of prosperity provides an important clue about what has been happening to Wolverhampton and the West Midlands during the past seven years. Central Wolverhampton looks prosperous today because until a very few years ago it *was* prosperous. Wolverhampton is no Liverpool or Hartlepool dragged down by decades of decline. From 1945 onwards Wolverhampton and the West Midlands enjoyed almost 30 years of uninterrupted growth. The region was seen as the nation's industrial powerhouse, the motor industry its most prized asset. By 1975 it enjoyed, after London and the South East, the highest level of GDP and income per head of any region in the country.

The Wolverhampton economy, along with the economy of the rest of the West Midlands, is dominated by the three great engineering sectors — transport, mechanical, and electrical engineering. This was the traditional 'heavy' manufacturing: of vehicles and their components, boilers and furnaces, machine tools, machinery for construction, agriculture, and mining; process plant for the chemical, textile, food and tobacco industries. Its electrical engineering was also biased towards heavy goods: turbines, generators, industrial motors, meters, and gauges. From the Black Country too came the parts for these products, bashed into shape by the forges and foundries.

These were the sectors which bore the brunt of the recession, and when it came, the recession hit Wolverhampton with overwhelming force. Between 1978 and 1983 Wolverhampton lost 29 per cent of its jobs in construction, 36 per cent in metal manufacture and in transport engineering, 38 per cent in mechanical and instrument engineering, and 59 per cent in electrical engineering. The collapse of manufacturing dragged down the service sector with it, with 15 per cent of retailing jobs disappearing between 1979 and 1981.



Express & Star

Above: Councillors Geoff Edge and (below) Dennis Turner in the Wolverhampton Enterprise office; local politicians with an enterprising response to the crisis

THE biggest redundancies came in the biggest firms. In 1980 and 1982 British Steel and British Leyland closed their Wolverhampton plants with job losses of 2,500 and 750. Between 1979 and 1982, in Wolverhampton alone, GKN laid off 1,773 workers, and Goodyear 1,374. Thousands of further redundancies were provided by the disappearance of long established Black Country metal companies, with names like Bettles, Heywood, Fellows, Gibbons and Herbertson.

Economists' categories of recession and recovery have little practical meaning here. The important fact of Wolverhampton's recent economic history is that the recession has continued without interruption, pushing the rate of unemployment relentlessly upwards: 6.8 per cent in November 1979, 11.6 per cent in 1980, 16.4 per cent in 1983, 18.6 per cent in November 1985.

For a community in the grips of industrial decline news of closures and redundancies

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

becomes part of the routine of everyday life. I went to see Dennis Duffy, AUEW organiser for the West Midlands region, brother of the late Terry Duffy and, despite all that's been happening around him, still a man of considerable friendliness and humour. In the West Midlands his union has probably been harder hit by the recession than any other. Whenever our talk was interrupted by the telephone, Dennis showed a certain reluctance to answer it. He explained that the telephone had been ringing with bad news for seven years, and so he no longer much liked picking it up.

A few days later I met Brian Blakeley, business editor of the *Wolverhampton Express and Star*, one of whose jobs is to bring news of closures and redundancies to the people of Wolverhampton. He explained that the demise of companies resembled the demise of people. Some companies were well known to be in dire straits, so their final end came as no surprise. But others would succumb without warning like Wolverhampton's latest casualty, Joshua Bigwood Ltd, a long established engineering firm with 95 employees, which had just called in the receiver. No one had known that Bigwood's was in trouble. Later, when I visited the Wolverhampton Chamber of Commerce, I was to get some idea of just how many casualties there had been.

I wanted to find out something about the many good Wolverhampton companies which had disappeared during the recession. Were they all examples of industrial deadwood, or where there some lively companies among them, the unnecessary victims of monetarism? I was talking along these lines with Peter Coles-Johnson, Director of the Chamber when Muriel Tonks, his assistant, came in bearing a card index whose size and weight would have done justice to an index for 'Shakespeare' at the British Library.

It contained, she explained, the names of all those companies which had left the Chamber since 1979. There were around 800. Muriel Tonks and Peter Coles-Johnson went through the index, pausing occasionally to say something about one of the better companies which had gone. Many of them found to their cost that innovation does not necessarily pay. Often these more enterprising plants had invested in new plant in the late '70s, only to find that with the onset of recession they could no longer cover their overheads. After 40 minutes they had mentioned more than 30 companies. But they had only reached 1981.

Although Wolverhampton has been damaged by the recession as severely as any community in Britain it is not in a state of depression and shock. Perhaps the years of success left it with reserves of confidence. Some of the more imaginative responses to the crisis have come from the town's political leadership. The two key politicians are Geoff Edge, County Councillor for the Blakenhall Ward, Chairman of the West Midlands Enterprise Board (WMEB), and former Labour MP; and Dennis Turner, Deputy Leader of the Borough Council, a director of the WMEB, and Labour's Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for the Wolverhampton South East constituency.

Geoff Edge has been Chairman of the WMEB since its beginnings in 1982. I asked him if, as a young MP of the 1974 intake, he would ever have imagined himself in this role of municipal investment banker. He replied that he saw a strong continuity between then and now. Ten years ago he was thinking about Labour's alternative economic strategy, with its emphasis on the role of planning agreements and enterprise boards. Now these ideas were embodied in the activities of the WMEB.

However, as it has grown older the WMEB's operations have taken on a steadily more commercial complexion. In 1983 the WMEB took a majority shareholding in the metals firm Sage Aluminium, a venture which seems to have been taken in part to make an ideological point. The investment was not a success and there have been no further examples of municipal ownership.

Today the WMEB invests, in the words of its own prospectus, 'on a strictly commercial basis'. Most of its financing takes the form of venture capital for medium sized companies, most of them, given the structure of West Midlands industry, in engineering. During its first three years the WMEB invested £10 millions of its own money, and this £10m resulted in leveraged finance of £45m. Thirty-one of its first 34 ventures have succeeded, a respectable record even by the standards of the City.

The Board estimates that these initiatives saved or created 4,000 jobs. Last year the WMEB received recognition from the City's commanding heights when Lazard Securities established a Regional Unit Trust for the West Midlands, and appointed WMEB as joint managers. Sir John Knott and Geoff Edge look improbable allies, but so far their partnership has been working very smoothly.

WHILE GEOFF EDGE is a politican who operates on a regional, even national stage, Dennis Turner is one who has stayed closer to home. If Labour ever wants to show that it can match the Liberals in the practice of community politics, Dennis Turner is the kind of politician it should start talking about.

Dennis Turner's community is Bilston, the steel town on Wolverhampton's south side which lost its plant in 1980. For its inhabitants, Bilston is where the real Black Country begins, and from Bilston on southwards the landscape does take on more and more of the imprint of the early industrial revolution. The canal system laid out in the 18th century is still there, so are the forges and foundries which grew up along their banks. The working communities of the Black Country have the closeness and sense of place to be found in small country towns. They too can trace their roots back to the 18th century.

Dennis Turner was born in Bilston and has lived there all his life. He began working at the Bilston steel plant in 1964. When BSC announced the closure of the plant in 1976, Dennis Turner led the fight to keep it open. He still thinks that the case against closure was unanswerable, and it still rankles with him that BSC would never debate the issue in public. But the plant's closure also gave him an opportunity. He and nine other steel workers pooled their redundancy payments, formed a co-operative, and together bought the plant's club and canteen. The Springvale Leisure, Sports and Social Club has thrived ever since and in a district crippled by years of unemployment the club is a rallying point for those who might otherwise have lost hope. A big and burly man, Dennis Turner presides at the Club as host, proprietor, and benevolent political godfather. As more than one club member said to me: 'no one out of work in Bilston goes hungry while Dennis is around.'

He feeds this experience into his work on the City Council, which has set up its own enterprise board, Wolverhampton Enterprise Limited (WELD). Its role is to support small businesses and it creates between 400 and 700 jobs a year. The Wolverhampton Polytechnic supports local business with its own CAD-CAM (computer aided design/computer aided manufacture) facility, and with a centre advising businesses on data processing systems. Wolverhampton has also gone further than most local authorities in using academic research to guide its policies for the unemployed. It commissioned Paul Willis's study of youth unemployment in Wolverhampton, one of the most important studies of its kind yet to appear. It also commissioned the Polytechnic's Centre for Unemployment Studies to do a household survey of the unemployed, their benefits and services.

These studies have led to the establishment of a youth counselling and information centre; to the setting up of two training centres for unemployed people run by themselves; and to a drive to increase the take-up rates for benefits and services. Wolverhampton also has Bilston Community College, one of Britain's most proletarian institutions of further education. Its syllabus is geared to the needs of women, single parents, union members, and the unemployed themselves. If students are unable to get to class, the college will take the class to them, holding lectures out on the housing estates or, if necessary, in student's own homes.

No one involved in these initiatives is under any illusion that they can, unaided, halt the onrush of industrial decline. It was often pointed out to me that the benefits of a whole year of job creation at WELD can be nullified by a single announcement of redundancies at a company the size of GKN. The best these initiatives can do is to alleviate some of the worst consequences of decline.

This sense of realism also guides the Borough's overall economic strategy, presided over by Michael Lyons, its young and impressive Chief Executive. Hitherto Wolverhampton has been developing some of its many derelict sites, in the hope of attracting so-called footloose industry. But there is in fact very little 'footloose' industry around so Lyons now thinks that priority must be given to preserving what industry Wolverhampton still has left. He like everyone else, knows that he is conducting a holding operation, and that Wolverhampton's future hinges on decisions which will be taken, not in Wolverhampton or the West Midlands, but in Whitehall. Wolverhampton will sink or swim with the rest of industrial Britain. □

Next week: *the firms which have survived the recession leaner — and a great deal weaker.*

Simon Head is a freelance industrial journalist.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MEDIA

Papers say hot, people say not

PAUL FOOT

EVEN IN THE heat of the battle, the polls were adamant. Sixty six per cent of the British were against the American invasion of Libya; 29 per cent for. What about the newspapers? Six national daily newspapers whose circulation is 86 per cent of the total, supported the invasion. Four, with 14 per cent of the circulation, were against.

The *Sun* rejoiced. Aliens were being killed, and the blood lust was higher than at any other time since the Falklands. THRILLED TO BLITZ was the *Sun*'s headline, followed by five pages of jubilation. Even the Page 3 nude took second place to the glories of the United States Airforce in top killing form.

The *Daily Express* called the raid 'a Vital Blow For Freedom'. Whoever wrote the leader modestly assumed he was speaking for his country. 'Most of the British public will applaud her courage and wisdom' he wrote of Mrs Thatcher. The *Daily Mail* hailed the Prime Minister's 'debt of honour' to the President of the United States.

Mr Reagan, declared the *Mail* leader, had been killing children 'in defence of the civilised world'. The *Daily Star*, which started as a radical Labour paper (as did the *Sun*), plastered all over the front page: REAGAN WAS RIGHT. BRITAIN IS WITH YOU — MAGGIE. The article was written by Anthony Smith, the *Star*'s political editor. The purpose of the headline was not clear, but it came across as a statement of the paper's policy. The editorial, on page 8, was slightly more doubtful. 'Only history will tell whether they were right or wrong,' it hedged. But the *Star*'s front page support was in the bag.

The same effect — a huge front page headline which appeared as a statement from the paper — was achieved by *Today*. 'WE MUST NOT CRINGE BEFORE THE TERRORIST' was the headline, in quotes. Putting a headline in quotes without saying who said it is very popular nowadays. It has the intended dramatic effect, without tying the paper to it. The quotation came, in fact, from Reagan, but it looked as though it came from *Today*. *Today*'s coverage was all Thatcher and Reagan and Rambo, and you had to wait until page 6 for a '*Today* Comment', entitled: 'Making the World a More Perilous Place'. The editorial spelt out a cautious opposition to the raid.

This double-act, aggressive news and pacific editorials, reminded me rather of the *Daily Mirror*'s coverage of the Falklands war. The editorials were consistently rational, calling for a negotiated settlement, and opposing the use of force. The news coverage was swept along on the tide of combat and victory.

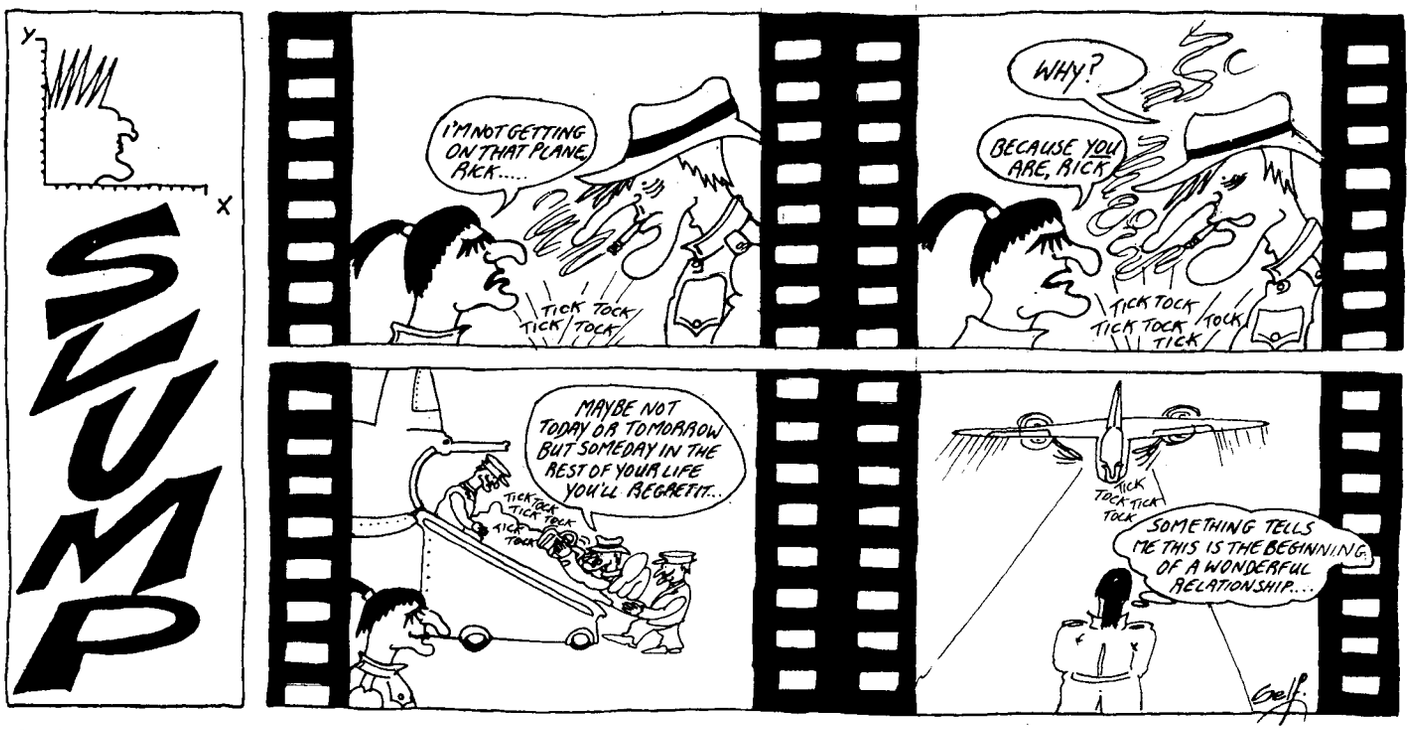
On the Libyan raid, the *Mirror*'s line was reversed. The front page on the day after the raids was a *Mirror* special, in the paper's best tradition of outraged propaganda. Reagan's ridiculous quotation 'WE DID WHAT WE HAD TO DO' was printed in huge type around a picture of a wounded child crying in agony. But the effect of this was tarnished by a page 2 editorial which *supported* the action (and an editorial before the raid which practically invited it). In the Falklands war, the *Mirror*'s line was to oppose the war, but report it aggressively. Over Libya, the *Mirror* seems to support the military action, but report it pacifically.

The 'quality' papers put up a slightly braver show. Murdoch's *Times*, of course, grovelled with the rest ('The justification for the US raid ought not to have been in doubt'), but the *Telegraph* was opposed. Its editorial was headlined 'a bad decision'. Much of its reporting reflected this view. Max Hastings has heard far too many times for his liking the famous remark on Lord Camrose's deathbed — 'You can be as rich as I am if you don't liven up the *Daily Telegraph*'. He may find it even more disastrous to inject the *Daily Telegraph* with shock doses of common sense, though so far it seems to have been in line with its readers. The *Guardian* leader started: 'They were wrong to do it, and we were foolish to help them'. From then on it apologised and prevaricated with its usual smudge.

Was there really not a single national paper prepared to indulge in a moment's polemic against one of the nastiest international incidents since Suez? Yes, there was. I quote: 'Yesterday's bombing of Libyan targets by US aircraft was futile, deplorable and almost certainly counter-productive: not merely is it unlikely to halt Libyan-sponsored terrorism; it will leave in its wake significant political damage both to the US and the UK'. On and on this went in a rising crescendo of fury.

Am I seeking publicity for some far-left tract? Not at all. This was the *Financial Times*, the national quality paper with the smallest circulation, which does not rely on bluster and claptrap to hold on to it. It tells the truth to its class. The truth is that the Libyan invasion is bad even for the ruling classes (as the collapse of share prices quickly proved).

The *Financial Times* could see that. Most of the other papers are now so lost to militaristic hysteria they cannot see anything. I suppose we should be grateful that the British people — most of them — are a good deal more sensible and decent than the newspapers they read. □


SLUMP
I'M NOT GETTING ON THAT PLANE, RICK.....
TICK TOCK TICK TOCK
WHY?
BECAUSE YOU ARE, RICK
TICK TOCK TICK TOCK TICK
MAYBE NOT TODAY OR TOMORROW BUT SOMEDAY IN THE REST OF YOUR LIFE YOU'LL REGRET IT...
TICK TOCK TICK TOCK TICK TOCK
TICK TOCK TICK TOCK
SOMETHING TELLS ME THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF A WONDERFUL RELATIONSHIP...

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DIARY

Claudia Wright

Washington

It has been a week — as Franklin Roosevelt said in 1941 of the only time that the territory of the United States has been bombed from the air — that will live in infamy. The US has finally crossed the threshold — as the French, the British and the Israelis have all done before — of going to war with the modern Arab world.

With the Americans, as with the others, there is the same sense of technological (and racial) superiority, the same strategic arguments about splitting the Arabs, and the same incomprehension that when the United States acts on 'incontrovertible evidence' that Arabs are terrorists, Arabs will act on their own 'incontrovertible evidence' that Americans are war criminals.

What Reagan authorised last week eliminates all shred of the moral distinction between war and terror. Take your sides, the Americans are saying to the world. There are now no distinctions between Libyans, Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims on one side; Americans, Israelis and British on the other. But don't worry, the Americans are also saying. 'Fears can yield to the sober satisfaction of seeing justice done', preached the *New York Times*. As they used to say about the inability of Japanese pilots to fly at night (before Pearl Harbour), or the inferiority of the Vietnamese (before Tet 1968), this American war of HARMS and SHRIKES, 'Ravens', 'Hornets' and 'Hawkeyes' will surely be over by Christmas.

○

In Washington it is a time of technological thrills and macho jokes. Donald Regan, the White House Chief of Staff, said the words of the Marine Corps hymn might have to be rewritten: 'From the halls of Montezuma to what's left of Tripoli.' The President himself told a well-known baseball player what he thought of Colonel Gadafy: 'I think we ought to nail his nuts to that log over there and push him over.' With video replays of the bombing runs, and page after newspaper page recapitulating how the US Navy and Air Force staged their attack, an entire capital city is playing the boys' game of 'GI Joe'. Professors of politics explain in all seriousness how the infra-red videotapes prove there was no US intention to assassinate Gadafy, because they had seen on their own television screens the infra-red outline of Gadafy's tent which US bombardiers refused to hit. As I'm not one of the boys, I asked how a tent pitched in the open air at 2 a.m. could show such a precise infra-red outline. Do you think, I asked a media-certified expert on Colonel Gadafy, that the American infra-red sensors were picking up the Libyan leader smoking in bed? Maybe, replied the expert, forgetting that even leaked CIA profiles say Gadafy faithfully observes the muslim prohibition of tobacco.

○

Three days after President Johnson fabricated the incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin in August 1964, the Congressional resolution to legalise the US war against Vietnam passed the Senate with just two votes in opposition; the House of Representatives approved without any dissent at all. But this time public opinion is even more solidly behind Reagan than it was behind Johnson — not one Senator or Congressman has spoken in opposition. The nearest anyone in Congress has dared to challenge the Administration is the minimalist remark by the Republican Senator from Connecticut, Lowell Weicker: 'If armed conflict is to be a permanent policy between the United States and Libya, then that's a matter that should be discussed with the Congress.'

○

The bloodthirsty mood is nothing new among the Administration's leading voices. But the American media deserve most of the credit for turning public opinion against the Arabs. Two American journalists stand out. John Cooley, the ABC television correspondent in London, has been pursuing his personal vendetta against Gadafy for years. In 1981, he became the first American journalist to urge in print the overthrow and assassination of Gadafy as national policy. What we could do to stop the menace in Libya, Cooley wrote in the *Washington Star* on 18 March 1981, was to 'liquidate Gadafy' and save 'the international community' from 'the damage that an unbalanced leader with massive resources can inflict'. He elaborated on this recommendation in a book, subtitled 'the complete account of Gadafy's revolution' — as if he didn't expect Gadafy to survive beyond publication day in 1982. Since then, Cooley has moved freely in and out of Libya on his press credential. He was there, safe and sound at the Grand Hotel, Tripoli, during the attack.

But if Cooley has led the media pack baying for Gadafy's blood, Bob Woodward, a journalist at the *Washington Post*, has helped orchestrate the debate among Administration officials over dozens of assassination and coup plots that have been drafted since 1981. In February 1982, Woodward reported what his CIA friends had told him — that Gadafy had been shot in the jaw in an assassination attempt that had almost succeeded. The problem was that none of Woodward's purported evidence was true. I was in Tripoli and, hours after Woodward's reported 'shooting', I was able to confirm that the Prime Minister of Kuwait had met Gadafy — and that there was no security alert or massive roundup of 'suspects' as Woodward claimed.

○

Woodward's subsequent reports have all been of a piece. After establishing how much of a war with Libya Americans would swallow, Woodward's first report after last week's attack was strangely similar to the latest CIA psychological assessment. The killing of his adopted infant daughter and the wounding of his two young sons had caused Gadafy to sink 'into a severe depression', Woodward wrote, citing 'a reliable intelligence report reaching officials here'. The purpose behind this remarkable piece of news was that 'Gadafy has begun displaying the extravagant mood swings of a manic depressive'. When the swing is up, Woodward was implying, he would attack the US again. That he might already have done so was suggested by another leak that, according to Woodward, 'The United States is close to proving that Libya is responsible for the shooting' of the US Embassy official in Khartoum the day after the US raid. If the Administration hasn't killed Gadafy and won its war with Libya by Christmas, it won't be the fault of Cooley and Woodward.

See p.24 for Roger Woddis.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LIBERALS SURRENDER AND REJOICE WITH REAGAN

On Saturday 19 April peace groups throughout the USA mobilised supporters to protest against the attack on Libya. But their voices found little resonance. JOHN JUDIS examines why liberals in Congress and in the press have capitulated to the Administration's thirst for blood

Washington

AMERICAN PUBLIC opinion overwhelmingly backed the 14 April bombing raid against Libya. An ABC-*Washington Post* poll that evening found 70 per cent of Americans favouring air strikes, with only 17 per cent against. A CBS-*New York Times* poll the next evening found 77 per cent in favour and 14 per cent opposed. Popular opinion was reinforced by the great majority of American columnists and commentators, from the *New York Times*'s Anthony Lewis to the *Washington Post*'s George Will.

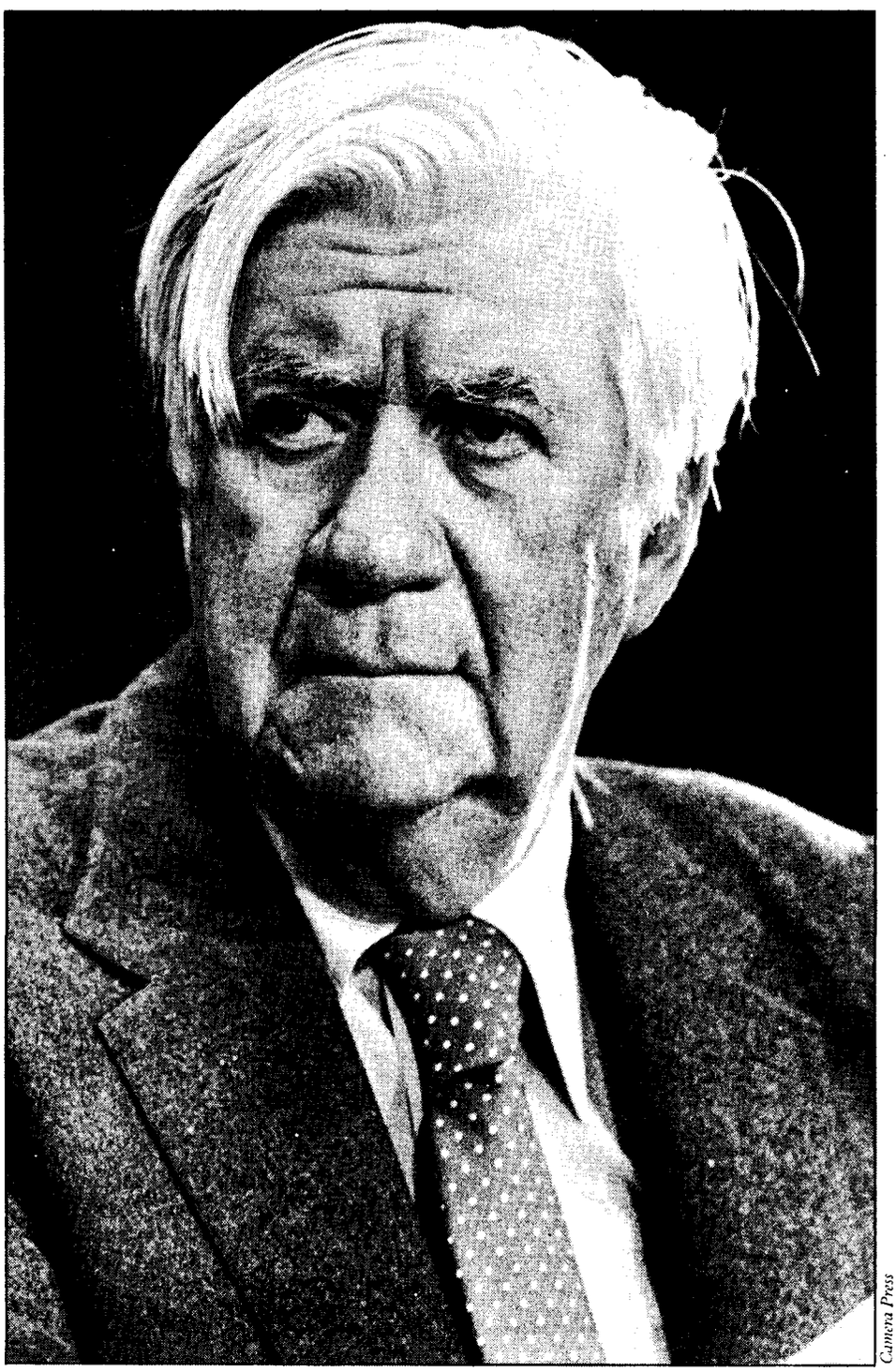
The public's reaction is not difficult to explain. Most Americans have accepted at face value short-lived and dramatic uses of military force against presumed enemies. In May 1975, the Ford Administration sent planes and marines against Cambodian targets in order to force the release of the 39 captured crewmen of the US ship Mayaguez. Calls to the White House then ran almost 8 to 1 in favour of that action.

Later, of course, it was learned that several hours before the US attack, the Cambodians had already signalled their willingness to return the crewmen.

Recent approval for these kinds of actions, whether directed against Libya or Grenada, has been further enhanced by Americans' insecurity about their place in the world. In the wake of defeat in Vietnam, a deteriorating international trade position and the national humiliation of the 1979-80 Iranian hostage crisis, Americans have worried that they were becoming a second rate power and have enthusiastically supported displays of force to reaffirm US global might.

Candidate Reagan successfully played upon these fears — in 1980, promising to restore America's 'place in the sun', and in 1984, running for re-election on the slogan 'America is back'. And President Reagan has directed his foreign policy like some Western drama, in which the beleaguered hero, riding his white horse, sees off hired guns and villainous cattle rustlers.

Events have become symbols of events; and policy itself has become the script of a larger drama. Needing to direct attention away from the massacre of US Marines in Beirut and to demonstrate his commitment to 'rolling back' communism, the Reagan Administration invaded Grenada. The invasion was at best a minor skirmish, but it wasn't the act itself that counted; it was what it betokened about the



Camera Press

House Speaker and influential Democrat Tip O'Neill: hanging on in there for Nicaragua but decidedly flaky on the Tripoli bombings

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Administration and about America. By the time bombs began raining down upon Gadafy's Tripoli headquarters, Americans were convinced that he was a psychotic who, if not restrained by force, would soon be planting bombs in US church basements.

What was surprising about the reaction to the bombing, however, was that liberal columnists and politicians, who vigorously opposed the Vietnam war and now oppose funding for the Nicaraguan contras, also almost universally backed the President's action. In 1975, Anthony Lewis denounced the American use of force to free the Mayaguez crewmen. 'Once again an American government shows that the only way it knows how to deal with frustration is by force,' Lewis then wrote. 'Using a sledge hammer to crack a nut is self-defeating for nations as for individuals.' But Lewis now justified the Libyan bombing. 'To oppose state terrorism is the price of civilisation in these ugly times,' Lewis wrote.

Other liberals were even more forthcoming. The *Washington Post*'s David Broder called the bombing raid 'a necessary and proper step'. Senator Edward Kennedy said, 'I think all Americans would stand with their Commander-in-Chief at this moment'. And House Speaker Tip O'Neill declared: 'All this started because of the evil heart of a bad man. He has to be brought to his knees'.

THE LIBERAL REACTION was not simply knee-jerk patriotism, but rather a capitulation to Reagan's popularity and to the currently revanchist mood of the American people. In some cases, capitulation has been simple opportunism. During the Grenada invasion, liberal Congressman Michael Barnes told the *Washington Post* that he supported the invasion, but told liberal constituents in his district that he opposed it. Last week, a leading Democratic Presidential contender for 1988 told close associates that he was opposed to the bombing, but had to support it publicly.

In other cases, capitulation has been gradual and unconscious. On the *New York Times*, Anthony Lewis and Tim Wicker are like survivors from an earlier era. The *Times*'s managing editor, A. M. Rosenthal, has become an outspoken neo-Conservative, who has banished liberals from the newsroom and has published a series by so called terror expert Claire Sterling as front page exclusives. Pressure to adjust one's perspective — on Libya if not Nicaragua — becomes overpowering.

But there is another factor to explain liberals' reaction. Many liberals in Congress uncritically back whatever the Israeli government does and thinks. Representative Stephen Solarz, from New York, for instance, who was more active than almost any American to topple Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines, will not countenance American pressure on Israel to amend its West Bank policies. This leaves liberals like Solarz singularly unable to understand the roots of terrorism in the Middle East.

The present upsurge in Middle Eastern terrorism dates precisely from the 1982-83 Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanon, which discredited moderate Palestinian leadership, radicalised the Lebanese Shi'ites, and made the US a target for Palestinians and Shi'ites who wanted to avenge US backed Israeli policy. Libya and Syria have sponsored much of the terrorism, but the show would have gone on in any case.

The terror will only abate if the US uses whatever leverage it has to force meaningful negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. But neither the Reagan Administration nor Congressional liberals are willing to acknowledge this. The Administration approaches the Middle East, a region consumed by religious, ethnic and national rivalries, in the same way that it approaches Central America — as a chess board on which only the US and the Soviet Union are players.

For their part, Congressional liberals approach the Middle East as a land populated either by friends or enemies of Israel. They correctly see Gadafy as an enemy not only of Israel, but of Egypt and the US. They ignore the factors that have given rise to millions of Palestinians and other Arabs sharing Gadafy's sentiments about the United States and Israel.

BOTH LIBERAL and popular support for Reagan's Libyan policy, though, may still prove fleeting, for while the American public supported the bombing raids, Americans will not countenance a protracted war between themselves and the myriad of groups that are willing to act on behalf of the Libyans.

Reagan's pollster Richard Wirthlin acknowledged the problem that the President faces if terrorists now step up their killing in response to the bombing raids.

'Those things will determine how this will be viewed a month and a half from now, which may be something different than the way people are now considering it,' Wirthlin said.

Public opinion analyst William Schneider, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, sees the same problem looming for the Reagan Administration. According to Schneider, the public 'approves of punishing terrorists,' but 'wants to ask only one question: how much risk is involved?

'By pursuing a more activist foreign policy, we may risk stimulating terrorist retaliation, hurting innocent people, hampering arms control negotiations, getting involved in other country's problems, or even starting a war. To Americans, these are unacceptable risks.'

Public support in the US for Libya has also had surprisingly little symbolic spill-over into the debate over aid to the Nicaraguan contras. A CBS-*New York Times* poll last week showed that only 25 per cent of Americans approve of aid to the contras, while 62 per cent oppose it.

Congressional liberals certainly show signs of continuing their resistance on this front. When the President reminded the House of Representatives last week that Gadafy had 'sent $400 million and weapons and advisors to Nicaragua', House Speaker O'Neill responded: 'These are two completely different matters'. □

John Judis is senior editor of In These Times.

THOSE COMMUNISTS!

DRESSED UP TO GO NOWHERE

Italy's Communists are the best organised in Europe — but no one knows what they stand for, says DONALD SASSOON

HUNDREDS OF billboards in the streets of Florence did not allow you to forget it for an instant; the city was host to the Seventeenth Congress of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). The two main posters had been designed by one of Italy's leading graphic artists. The first cited one of the key sentences from the Congress theses; *The PCI—an integral part of the European Left* and the words *Peace, Work, Progress*; the other poster celebrated self-irony — a recent communist discovery — and read; *These communists! Always going on about peace, work and progress.*

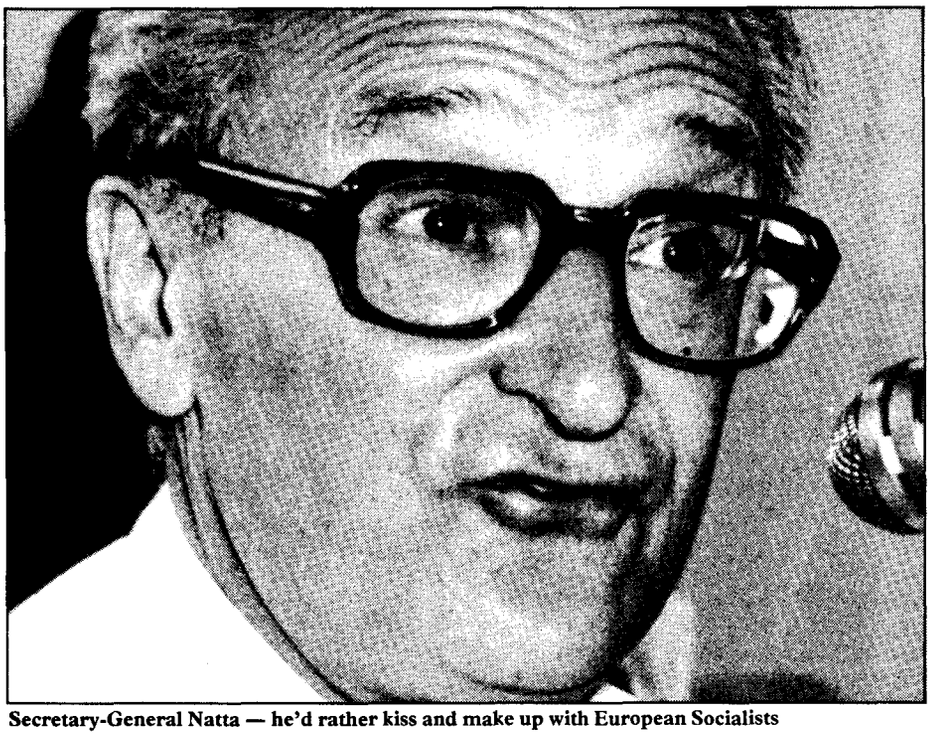
The Italian Communist Party has reason to boast. It is the largest in Western Europe both in terms of membership (1.6 million) and electoral support (30 per cent). It claims the richest theoretical tradition, the most sophisticated internal structure, the most efficient organisation and the most diversified and widely sold press. It is furthermore, the only communist party in Western Europe which is stronger (in fact two and half times stronger) than its socialist rival, the PSI.

The PCI has been the driving force behind the two most important campaigns of recent years; against the installation of cruise missiles in Sicily and against the modification of the automatic wage index. In each case one million people demonstrated in the streets of Rome. Its democratic credentials are no longer seriously challenged by any other Italian party. Its criticism of Soviet domestic and foreign policy has been enduring and consistent and is accepted by well over 90 per cent of the membership. Its European commitment has received support and recognition by the most important socialist parties in the EEC and first and foremost by both the German Social Democrats and the French Socialists.

ON THE DEBIT side, however, the entries are only too numerous. In Europe it is the only major party of the Left which has never been in power (except for the short-lived postwar coalition of 1944-47). During the last 10 years it has not been able to achieve an electoral breakthrough comparable to its achievement of 1976 (34 per cent), although it topped the polls at the European elections of 1984.

The Communists have had to abandon the strategy of the historic compromise with the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Camera Press

Secretary-General Natta — he'd rather kiss and make up with European Socialists

leading Italian party, Christian Democracy. The PCI's current strategy of democratic alternative presupposes the possibility of achieving an alliance with the Socialists. But relations between the two, though improved, are still tense. The PCI lost the campaign on cruise missiles and the referendum it had called on the wage index issue. It has also lost control of local government in most major cities because the Socialists tended to prefer a coalition with the Christian Democrats.

Local participation in the debates leading to the congress has been limited; there is no longer that political enthusiasm which was a feature of local party life. A major generational change at the top is needed. The leadership is ageing; the Secretary-General, Alessandro Natta, an able and intelligent man, comes out of this congress much strengthened, but he is nearly 70; most of the party Secretariat is made up of men (yes, it is male-dominated) who are over 60.

The Communists face a similar problem to many parties of the Left; their political proposals tend to be vague and unclear to the general public. Most Italians know that the PCI does not wish to nationalise everything (though only a few realise that it does not wish to nationalise *anything*) or destroy the middle classes. The image of the party is that of a serious, cautious and efficient machine able to run local government with unparallelled honesty and committed to radical reforms, not to revolutionary upheavals.

However, few party members, let alone ordinary citizens, could spell out what concrete solutions the PCI has for the economic and social problems which face the country. Most of the debates it conducts are concerned either with defining the possible social and political, international and domestic alliances it should pursue or with specific legislative proposals. It is now being recognised within the party that one of the major problems is that it's not yet in a position to produce a clear and succinct government programme. Something akin to a 'shadow cabinet' is now being planned.

THOSE WHO attended the congress on 9-13 April could not but be struck by the feeling of self-confidence emanating from the 1,000 delegates who filled the huge hall. The other striking feature of this year's gathering was the emphasis on openness. Amendments to the party's programme were invited from any party member, which gave way to a democratic orgy; 2,466 amendments were put forward and 938 approved to be sent to the congress.

However, the dominant ethos was that of compromise and party unity, with a pervasive desire to reach a common platform acceptable to (almost) everyone. Amendments which gathered more and more support at branch and federation level were often incorporated in the final document even if they didn't obtain a majority.

The result of this three-month long process is that by the time the actual congress took place most of the important and divisive issues had been sorted out. The unlikely Labour Party equivalent of this exhaustive and exhausting process would be a giant composite resolution which amalgamated all resolutions. The mind boggles.

LUCIANA CASTELLINA, a former leader of the leftist Manifesto group (purged in 1969 and now back in the PCI) and much applauded by the delegates, dropped her anti-American amendment after Natta explained rather more clearly the PCI position towards the USA, which is basically that the communists should seek to build bridges with the Democratic Party. There was no sweetening of the pill for the resident pro-Soviet, Armando Cossutta, who withdrew his amendments to avoid being humiliated.

The veteran leader of the Left, Pietro Ingrao, fought on two issues; he advocated that the trade unions should abandon their oligarchical internal structure by using ballots (one might call this 'revolutionary Tebbitism') and that the PCI should seek the formation of a 'constituent government' i.e. a broad-based government whose absolute priority would be a reform of the political system (abolition of the Senate, change in the electoral system, etc). The congress met him halfway; it accepted that trade unions lacked democratic credibility but suggested that this was not due just to lack of consultation with the rank and file and it accepted that constitutional reforms would loom large in any government with communist ministers.

An anti-nuclear power amendment was lost by only 17 votes. The strength of feeling was such that Natta proposed a referendum be called on whether to expand Italy's nuclear power programme. On other issues, the party reaffirmed its past policies calling for an end to nuclear weapons but on the basis of reciprocity (no to unilateralism), Italy to stay in NATO, no to Star Wars, yes to European political union, yes to a European common energy policy, yes to monetary union. One wonders how Eric Heffer, the first Labour Party executive representative ever to attend, took this shameless Europeanism.

The PCI's most interesting recent development has been its changing attitude towards Europe. Natta warned that it is not possible to face the challenge of structural unemployment or of the new technologies or the growth of international economic power on the basis of the nation-state. However, he also admitted 'there is far more unity on the Right than on the Left'.

THE PCI makes no attempt to disguise its reformism. The official slogan of the congress described the PCI as a *moderno partito riformatore* committed to a programme and an alternative for 'Italy and Europe'. Clearly while the principles of eurocommunism still stand, the hoped-for oneness with other European communist parties is not to be and the PCI is instead hurriedly forging links with the leading European socialist and social-democratic parties. The Italian Communists can hardly be blamed for abandoning their counterparts. Not much is left of West European communism; the French CP is at its lowest level since the thirties, the Spanish has been reduced to a rump, the Greek and Portuguese are just beginning to get used to the twentieth century, the others are too small to matter much.

The PCI undoubtedly feels part of the European Left, though it stands apart from it on at least two counts. First of all, unlike all other major parties of the West European Left, it has no experience of government and has, for the next few years, little prospect of obtaining any. Secondly, its history precludes it from being part of the many international organizations of the socialist movement (there is also a question of consistency; having come out against any international communist organisation or forum it can hardly join a socialist one—at least not yet). That is why for some time to come the Italian communists in the European Parliament are condemned to sit—rather uncomfortably—with their former comrades from Portugal, Greece and France.

Donald Sassoon's Contemporary Italy *is published on 28 April by Longman's (£8.95).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

US, not Libyan, arms in Ulster

D Cunniffe, Wakefield, West Yorks

Mrs Thatcher cites as one of her reasons for supporting and enabling the American killing of Libyan civilians, the Libyan origin of weapons used by the IRA.

In my experience — three tours of duty in Northern Ireland as an infantry soldier — most of the weapons recovered from the Provisionals were manufactured in and obtained from the United States.

Can we now therefore expect to see RAF bombing raids on American cities?

Stem supplies to weapons junkies

David Lowry, European Proliferation Centre, London N1

Peter Kellner's commentary (*NS* 11 April) on the Channel 4 programme *Our bomb, the secret story* made much play of the analogy between the nuclear weapons enthusiasts and junkies. Dr Ross Hesketh (see letter following) made the same point about the incessant desire to produce plutonium in his evidence on behalf of CND to the Sizewell Inquiry.

In Hesketh's evidence he discussed the complex relationship between the US and UK — from 1958-9 onwards — based on the so-called Mutual Defense Agreement (MDA) on atomic energy matters. This is the enabling agreement that permits the reciprocal transfer of special fissionable materials (eg plutonium and enriched uranium) between both countries; it also formed the basis for the 1962 Nassau Agreement and the Trident Agreement, and facilitates Britain's testing of its nuclear warheads in Nevada.

Neither Kellner nor the Channel 4 programme mentions the import of the 1958-9 MDA, although it is arguable that it is the existence of this arrangement that buttresses both the government's support of Sellafield and undermines any early chances we have of implementing a fissionable material 'freeze'.

The Labour Party's current defence policy programme does, however, include the cancellation of this insidious agreement. That would be a unilateral initiative in support of a multilateral nuclear disarmament policy. We must hope there is no reneging on this, pre or post election.

Where were we on plutonium . . .

Professor R. V. Hesketh, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

Lord Marshall and four others are responsible for CEGB evidence given to the Sizewell Inquiry. Part of their evidence is that '. . . no plutonium produced in CEGB reactors has been applied to weapons use either in the UK or elsewhere . . .' It is this evidence that Lord Hinton, a former CEGB chairman, has publicly described as 'bloody lies'. The CEGB has made a similar claim more recently: '. . . no plutonium produced in CEGB reactors . . . has been exported for use in weapons . . .' (*Nature 318, 406; 1985*).

A very large quantity of CEGB produced plutonium has been exported to the USA, at least the whole of the production up to 1969; the CEGB admits to approximately 4000kg. Reliable calculations suggest between 6000kg and 7000kg (*Nature 317, 213; 1985*).

The US Energy Secretary has stated that the US is *required* to use *all* this plutonium for military purposes (quoted in the *Electrical Power Engineer*, February 1985, p.38). Somewhat late in the day (*New Statesman*, 21 March 1986, p.6) Lord Marshall agrees, and he claims that Her Majesty's Government has said this 'very openly'. What HMG has in fact said very openly (*Hansard*, Commons, 4 February 1983, col.*206*) is that . . . 'no plutonium from the CEGB nuclear programme has ever been exported for use in weapons . . .'

Summing up at the Sizewell Inquiry, Lord Silsoe, Counsel for the CEGB, said: '. . . CND has charged the Board with lying and Government Ministers with misleading Parliament . . .' Bravo Lord Silsoe!

Oust John Cunningham

Peter Greig, London N22

You report (*NS* 18 April) Kim Howells' attack on the 'awful smugness' of the 'Muesli left', coupled with his plea to lay off John Cunningham.

Nuclear power is the crucial environmental issue we face today, and it is one where the party has lagged well behind the public. Opinion polls have shown consistently large majorities against nuclear power if given any alternative and I doubt that there is a single community in the country willing to accept low level nuclear waste without a fight. Massive campaigning to change hearts and minds is therefore not necessary on this issue.

What *is* necessary is a credible party policy. Environmental issues have acquired a high enough political profile to have a decisive influence on the next election, but Labour will not be taken seriously on any of them if John Cunningham remains as shadow minister.

Wellsprings of gay art

Thomas Ades, London N6

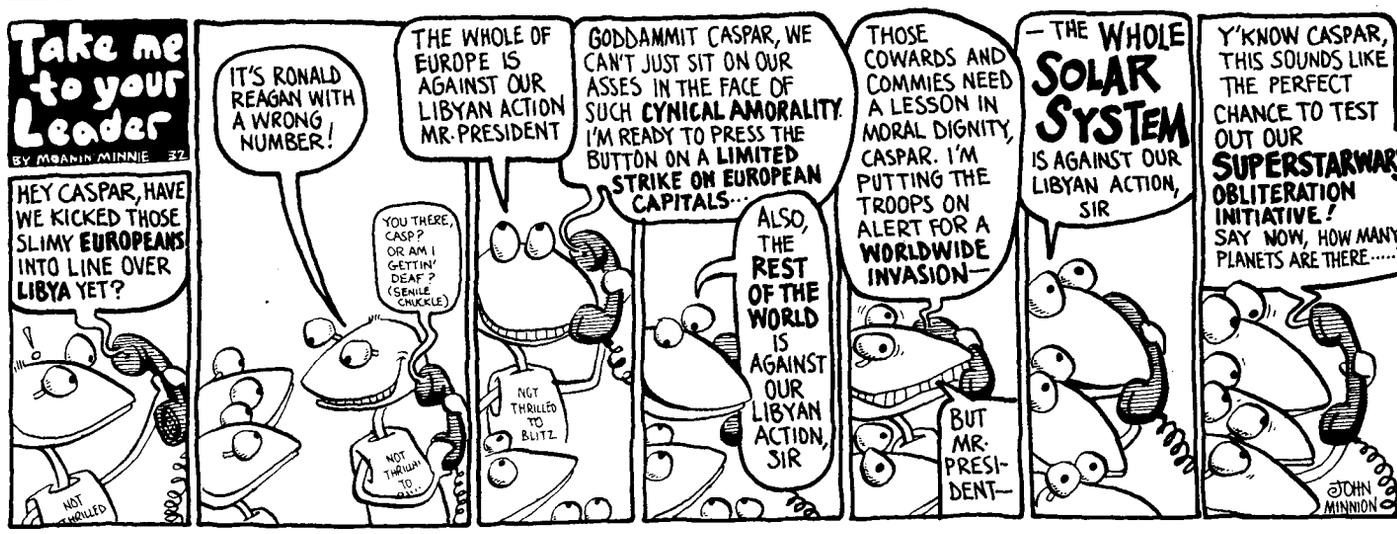
Andrew Lumsden (*NS* 11 April) appears to have an obsession with the fact that Britten and Pears *were gay*, which he claims should have been more openly stressed by critics in the 'quality' press. The important fact about the two lovers, 'as all music lovers straight or gay know or should know', was that they spent their life together, and that Britten knew Pears's voice so well that all his tenor roles are geared to that lyrical, soft, beautiful tone. This, of course, would not have occurred had they not been gay, but the gayness itself is not the important point.

As for repeated settings of texts by gay authors, the same point counts, as the texts are chosen for their concern with persecution (Melville, James), war (Owen), paranoia (Slater in 'Grimes') and the writers' acute sense of these things no doubt came from their gayness. Again, however, the gayness is not the main point: if it *was*, the message would be somewhat less universal, or at any rate (today) less interesting.

Andrew Lumsden's heart is in the right place, though his 'I-don't-know-much-about-art' attitude doesn't help his argument. However, the only way to make great gays known as great, *and* as gay, is not to make the gayness itself the sole purpose and wellspring of their work.

Robert Maycock, Editor, Classical Music *magazine*

How right you are in your piece about Sir Peter Pears to correct the mistakenly 'discreet' treatment of sexuality by the first obituary notices. Your readers may like to know that there is an obituary by his fellow musician Graham Johnson which treats the relation of life and music with openness, sensitivity and a natural balance. I appreciate that Andrew Lumsden had to write for the earliest possible issue; as we publish fortnightly. The 19 April issue was our first chance to get Graham Johnson's piece into print.


Take me to your Leader
BY MORRIS MINNIE 32
HEY CASPAR, HAVE WE KICKED THOSE SLIMY EUROPEANS INTO LINE OVER LIBYA YET?
NOT THRILLED
IT'S RONALD REAGAN WITH A WRONG NUMBER!
YOU THERE, CASP? OR AM I GETTIN' DEAF? (SENILE CHUCKLE)
NOT THRILLED TO BLITZ
THE WHOLE OF EUROPE IS AGAINST OUR LIBYAN ACTION MR. PRESIDENT
NOT THRILLED TO BLITZ
GODDAMMIT CASPAR, WE CAN'T JUST SIT ON OUR ASSES IN THE FACE OF SUCH CYNICAL AMORALITY. I'M READY TO PRESS THE BUTTON ON A LIMITED STRIKE ON EUROPEAN CAPITALS...
ALSO, THE REST OF THE WORLD IS AGAINST OUR LIBYAN ACTION, SIR
THOSE COWARDS AND COMMIES NEED A LESSON IN MORAL DIGNITY, CASPAR. I'M PUTTING THE TROOPS ON ALERT FOR A WORLDWIDE INVASION—
BUT MR. PRESIDENT—
— THE WHOLE SOLAR SYSTEM IS AGAINST OUR LIBYAN ACTION, SIR
Y'KNOW CASPAR, THIS SOUNDS LIKE THE PERFECT CHANCE TO TEST OUT OUR SUPERSTARWARS OBLITERATION INITIATIVE! SAY NOW, HOW MANY PLANETS ARE THERE.....?
JOHN MINNION

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Inside Boss and outside the law

Stan Winer, London NW

Denis Herbstein's piece on *Inside Boss* (*NS* 18 April) claims that 'Penguin was hampered by the fact that Gordon Winter could not come to Britain to defend himself'. This is simply not so. Indeed, the opposite is true. Penguin was greatly assisted by the fact that Winter could not be examined under oath. For such examination would have served to confirm that Penguin published the book recklessly, without (in my case, at any rate) even bothering to attempt verification of Winter's allegations.

The wider truth of the matter is that *Inside Boss* exemplifies the severe shortcomings of the law of defamation in this country. This issue is likely to be the focus of some attention at a hearing before the European Commission of Human Rights in Strasbourg on 10 July 1986.

The *Inside Boss* saga is not yet over. It is only just beginning.

Mirrored message

John Hedges, Dublin 8

Phillip Van Niekerk's report on the white backlash against 'reforms' in South Africa (*NS* 11 April) has parallels a lot closer to home for British socialists. Just change the political/racial tags and one could be talking about the North of Ireland.

'Today the government's reforms — rejected as inadequate by most Black/Irish nationalist political groups — are being seen by hardline Afrikaner/loyalist groups as a betrayal of the white/unionist population's right to govern itself.

'More specifically, the inability of those superficial (Hillsborough) reforms or of the government's security forces to stop the uprising of the Black/Irish nationalist community is creating a growing right-wing dissidence. At the same time as threatening residents of the Black townships/nationalist ghettoes, the white/unionist vigilantes are adding to the Nationalist Party's/British government's crisis of government.'

Deja vu?

Watch your language

Robert Galbraith, Glasgow

Why is it that the *New Statesman* — actually so careful to avoid the use of sexist or racist terminologies — persists in using the prefix 'Anglo' to mean 'British' or 'UK' as in the 'Anglo-Irish process'? Can you not be as sensitive to your Scottish, Welsh, and Ulster readers' feelings as you are to those of your female and non-white readers?

Better off alone

George Cowley, Worcester

As a one-time 'schizophrenic with manic-depressive tendencies' who has spent 16 years in a mental hospital (now labelled by my consultant psychiatrist as someone suffering from 'a schizo-affective illness') I am greatly encouraged to see you devote space to the problems of the mentally ill.

I have now lived alone in a council flat for six years, following two years in a rehabilitation hostel, and am slowly learning to 'forget' my past (though I still have horrendous nightmares). While in hospital I was always conscious of being a mental patient, i.e. a social reject; nowadays, although I spend 95 per cent of my time alone in my flat, with my books, radio, TV, records and thoughts, and have no social life (though I am in touch with two or three people by letter or phone), I do feel much less stigmatised than I used to, though even such a simple act as shopping can be an ordeal at times.

The point I am making is that I feel much more 'normal' and at peace living alone in the community than I ever did in hospital, constantly surrounded by my fellow-sufferers and the authority of the staff.

Housing chaos

Christian Wolmar, London N1

How sad that Hazel Smith (Letters 28 March) should not attempt to answer the points made in my article on the chaos in Lambeth's Housing Benefit Scheme but instead merely corrects a typographical error (not mine).

There are very real debates to be had on how Labour-controlled councils should combine efficiency in service delivery with fair treatment of their staff; on how they can use the Housing Benefit scheme to channel money to their poorest constituents; on the dangers of using up too much energy in politically more glorious causes like Nicaragua and nuclear free zones while ignoring basic services; and much more.

If Hazel Smith does not have the courage to discuss these questions, perhaps some of her colleagues do.

Searching for a researcher

Val Stevenson, 96 Mansfield Rd, London NW3 2HK

Women in Publishing is a group which addresses issues in the industry affecting women. For some time we have been working to set up a survey to establish the facts about the position of women in publishing: areas in which women are employed; salaries; numbers of women in managerial/senior positions; conditions of employment; training, etc. We also hope to make recommendations to publishing companies to ensure equal treatment of, and opportunities for, women in the industry.

A survey group has been set up and discussed this project with a wide range of people. We envisage a one-year project involving a survey, analysis of results and recommendations. We are looking for someone to take on this project. If any reader is a research student interested in the subject, or knows someone who might be, we would be pleased to hear from her.

Aids — the British response

Andy Kirby, London E1

It is a pity that everyone knows Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart* is the first play about Aids to hit these shores (*NS* 4 April). *Terminal Bar* and Swados's *A Quiet End* have been battering it for quite some while; though at venues perhaps less frequented by critics than the Royal Court.

Indeed the volume of American imports prompts me to ask why so little attention is given to attempts by our own writers to tackle this topic, such as *Grey Plague*, *Anti Bodies* and *Compromised Immunity*.

Schools need parent power

Kaktus Leach, Sheffield

In his article on Skool Politics (*NS* 11 April) John Wright did an excellent job of describing Labour and Conservative past problems with their policies on school education. Unfortunately he also attempted to develop a socialist education policy in about half a column which probably explains why he ends with the lame statement that 'schools should be able to challenge the inequalities in society'. Those of us who have attempted this grand scheme have quickly become demoralised as the process is like the tail trying to wag the dog.

At the same time 'parent power' was dismissed although this can be a powerful instrument for change if used in a socialist way making it completely different from the SDP approach.

Correction

In Marina Warner's article on Israel last week, three paragraphs recounting a conversation drawing an analogy between the American civil war and Israel today were transposed. The passage referred to a conversation with Raja Shehadeh, not the novelist Avram Yehoshua. We apologise for the confusion.

K H T

LIFE GUIDE PLAN

THERE IS AN IRREFUTABLE LINK BETWEEN YOUR ATTITUDES/MOODS AND YOUR DATE OF BIRTH. IT IS CALLED **BIORHYTHMS**

AT KHT WE HAVE ADDED A NEW AND SIGNIFICANT DIMENSION TO THIS AGE OLD EQUATION, NAMELY YOUR HANDWRITING STUDY. IT IS CALLED **GRAPHOLOGY**

THIS COMBINATION OF BIORHYTHMIC STUDY AND GRAPHOLOGY RESULTS IN THE MOST ACCURATE OF PERSONAL ANALYSIS AND INSPIRED PREDICITONS

WE CALL IT YOUR **LIFE GUIDE PLAN**

WE ARE INDEED PROUD TO OFER THIS SERVICE TO READERS AT **TWELVE POUNDS ONLY** WHICH REPRESENTS A 60% DISCOUNT ON OUR NORMAL CURRENT RATES

BY RETURN OF MAIL YOU WILL RECEIVE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF YOUR FEE AND THE DATE YOUR **LIFE GUIDE PLAN** WILL BE DESPATCHED TO YOUR ADDRESS BELOW.

SEND TO:
THE RESIDENT DIRECTOR
KINGSBOROUGH HERITAGE TRUST
KINGSBOROUGH HOUSE
PO BOX NO 329
GLASGOW G12 9PQ
SCOTLAND UK

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

POST CODE..... NS 1

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND ADVISE
* *COUPON (ABOVE)*
* *HANDWRITING SAMPLE (SENTENCE 20-30 WORDS)*
* *WHETHER LEFT OR RIGHT HANDED*
* *FEE OF £12.00 (CHEQUE, CASH, P.O)*
* *YOUR USUAL SIGNATURE(S)*
* *DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH*
* *SEX*

FULL MONEY BACK GUARANTEE IF NOT TOTALLY SATISFIED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MALE

Short story by Kathy Acker

Henry Iles

AS LONG AS I can remember, I have wanted to be a pirate. As long as I can remember, I have wanted to sail the navy seas. As long as I can remember wanting, I have wanted to slaughter other humans and to watch the emerging of their blood.

In so far as I know myself I don't know either the origin or the cause of my wants.

It was a dark night for pirates.

Winter had approached all of us on the ship. One night whose beginning was death, three pirates squatting on the deck just like fat cunts or pigs held a consultation which lingered, like death, without becoming anything else. For one human they had taken during their last battle remained bound and gagged near the bowsprit. Their discussion became more confused, then too confused, at least for the victim who could still hear; the pirates had become increasingly drunk. A fat slob waddled over to the victim who was a child and raped her again.

She didn't struggle as the other two did the same.

The first pirate turned to the second pirate.

'After I'd like to do it to you.'

'No,' the second pirate said. 'I'm younger than you so it's possible for me to have a child. I don't want one. Just cause it's safe for you . . .'

'Not if I do it in your asshole. In your asshole you're safe.'

'Just stop what you're doing. Above all I don't want to be pregnant!'

'You don't believe me. You don't trust . . .'

'No.' The second one explained: 'Why should I trust you? You tell me why I should trust you. You tell me why I should trust you who can't get pregnant not to make me pregnant.'

The third pirate came in his pants. A round stain showed.

'Don't you believe I can fuck you and not make babies?'

Used to protecting his virginity like a girl, the youngest of the pirates capitulated. 'If you let me alone I'll let you do it tonight. But you've got to promise you won't tell anyone.'

Fatty replied 'I promise' since he never meant anything by these words. 'But you're going to spread yourself for me now. Otherwise I want that thin trigger that thin cock you're showing me so much, I'll cut off your head to get at it.' Among themselves, also, pirates're murderous. 'But after I come when you're dead, you can do whatever you want.'

Fatty dove in, ground and pounded his cock up into the so tight it was almost impenetrable asshole. He pound and ground until the brat started wiggling; then thrust hard. Thrust fast. Living backbone. Jewel at top of hole. The asshole opened involuntarily. The kid screeched like nerves. After a while the kid felt Fatty become still. After a few more minutes he asked Fatty if he had come.

'Shut up. Shut. Up.' As it dropped out the final bit of sperm inflamed the top of his cockhole.

Barely mumbling 'Now it's time for me now it's time for what I want', the pirate who had just been fucked bent over the child tightly bound in ropes, already raped. His hands reached for her breasts. While sperm which resembled mutilated oysters dropped out of his asshole, he touched the breasts.

The three pirates turned away from the child. They went back to their work of gnawing and gorging themselves on Nestle's almonds, Cadbury chocolate flakes, barbecued tortilla chips, green beans, toffeed vanilla, Lucozade, and Mars bars. They guzzled down can after can of swill.

The Captain, me, walked on deck. 'What a group of pigs! Didn't your teachers in all the nice boarding schools you went to, which you never talk about, teach you about nutrition?'

'This ship isn't a public school,' Fatty blurted out through showers of Coca-Cola mixed with beer. 'This shit is a pirate ship. And this is a philanthropic association.'

'Sure,' Captain Thivai, me, sneered. 'I'm a sweet socialist government so I'm paying you to sit on your asses in the sun and get suntanned just so that you are so happy you will not revolt against my economic fascism.'

Fatty dared to oppose me. 'No way. This ship is our philanthropic association, our place of safety, our baby crib. Since they have enough dough to be our charity donors, all the people outside it, all the people outside us here, are our enemies.

'Since we live on this ship, we're orphans. Orphans are dumb and stupid.' Fatty was epileptic. 'Since we're stupid, we don't know how to conduct ourselves in decent (monied) society and we kill people for no reason.'

'Historically, weren't some of the most violent political murderers,' the punk added, 'aristocrats?'

'Do all of you have parents?' I asked my crew. I was astounded. 'Do you generally come from good backgrounds?'

'How can I answer a generality? So how can I answer any question?' Fatty obviously came from a superior background.

'Do you,' pointing my finger at the youngest therefore the weakest of the lot, 'do you, personally, have parents?'

'I don't have no parents.'

'Me neither.'

'Him also?'

'No one.'

'None.'

'No one has nothing anymore.'

'Then who'd you come out of and where d'you come from?' I wasn't going to be fooled by the scum.

'That's our business. Each one of us.'

The English pirate answered, 'We're not used to discussing private affairs. It's not your business on whom we piss.'

I had to agree with the English, for it was necessary for me to trust my crew about

> 'Roosters' red crests jumped through weighted-down grasses. A guard and his heavy gun descended . . .

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Henry Iles

'I smiled, I lowered my head, the barber trembled, my flesh peeled off my head and the tip of my ear . . .

whom I knew nothing except that they were not the scum of the earth, they were the scum of the now scum-filled seas.

And the next day, when the ship stopped near a shore on which a bordello was stretching out its claws, I jumped ship. A cock cried on the top of a hill. Roosters' red crests jumped through weighted-down grasses. A guard and his heavy gun descended. I hid from him.

Where there were buildings huge trees had showered dew on to their red roofs. My fear dried up my throat. My hands lay over my stomach for protection.

The sun . . .

Fear disintegrated my throat . . .

Stunned . . .

I woke. I was no longer free. Words woke me. 'It's me, Xaintrilles. This afternoon the General Staff'll interrogate you. Good luck 'n' all that. I'm leaving for Ait Saada.'

I didn't speak.

Xaintrilles squatted down on his haunches and looked at the bars. He saw a young man spread flat on the floor, still, his knees apart, a sackcloth jacket over only part of his stomach. 'Thivai, aren't you listening to me? Maybe you can't hear any more?'

I recognised despair enough to open my senses only inside me. Lice gnawed my cropped head. Xaintrilles carried this body inside, chafed hands and knees.

In the deep river firemen and convoy soldiers washed themselves. Mud scintillated around the decaying bath-house.

I lovingly rubbed my skull, the light wounds the hair-chopper had made. 'Shave me. To the flesh,' I said.

The gentle hair-cutter, as soon as his officer had left, positioned the straight razor at the front of the forehead. 'Thivai, I can't There's not enough left.'

Upon returning, the officer looked at the prisoner and ordered the barber to shave him totally.

I smiled, I lowered my head, the barber trembled, my flesh peeled off my head and the tip of my ear, the officer by his red leather boot crushed my shoeless foot; the cutter wiped his fingers on the linen knotted around my neck. Then he went back to his cutting. My hairs dropped off like flies. As they were cut, they brushed by the ears, the holes of the nostrils, caught in the eyebrows, mommy, I only went to the hairdresser to cut off a lock of hair, my matchstick, mommy's sitting in the armchair, mommy's holding my knee, mommy's picking up a magazine, mommy puts it on her knees. Véronique's behind the mirror. Véronique stands upright. Then the hairdresser pushes her down while Véronique makes signs which the mirror reflects. The cut hairs brush past the beehive I've hidden in my shirt; mommy leaves, forgetting her purse. She walks through the rain along the river. Am I dreaming? The hair-cutter looks around him, he puts his hand on the hot flannel of my pants, his hand climbs up my thigh, I look at Véronique, it's she who's raping me it's she who's touching me, mommy's screaming out loud and crying in the rain.

Dock workers drag barbed-wire sheets through the slush. Mommy bites her soaked scarf. The hair-cutter's hand sinks between my knees; again I push it away; his other hand travels down my stomach; my knees hit the marble washbasin which nevertheless maintains its balance; the hair-cutter's hand rests openly on my obviously palpitating stomach. The hairdresser looks behind him.

Under the door, mommy's drying her shoes. She enters the room. Night fell. Her wet hands hold my small ones, I fall into the armchair; mommy pays the hairdresser, he presses me against the door.

Mommy drags me out, down black streets until we reach the river. The dock-workers're trying to warm themselves by standing as close as possible to a fire made out of charcoal dust. Mommy, holding me in her arms, jumps into the thicker mist. She mounts the jetty and runs over the rocks. Snow is covering the rocks. I try to writhe myself away, but she's pressing me into her hips. So I bite her hand, while a tug-boat whose bright port dead-lights are throwing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

glimmers on a black oily sea moves down the estuary; mommy throws herself, . . ., I bite her hand, as her arms let go, I fall down the rocks, rolling down the rocks, mommy falls into the sea, (my mother's suicide), the foam finds and recovers her, I twist my body round toward the rocks. There a wave carries my mother's head. Her palms slide along a sleek, slightly glittering rock. The tug-boat bears the other way, then stops; a sailor runs on to a bridge; he unfastens a yawl, runs back on board, they row toward the jetty. Between the clouds the stars're shining. My head's bathing in a small abandoned puddle. A sailor jumps onto the jetty, lifts me in his strong arms, up, and strokes my forehead and left cheek. The other sailors ship their oars and, lifting up my mother's body, bear it over a huge flat rock. The sailor puts me to bed. From the tip of the tent's main peg a lantern was barely balancing. My blood flowed into my hands. The sailors telephoned, held my hands in theirs, covered my face. They tore the khaki posters and bills open . . .

After the jeeps and the lorries left, wounded on the forehead now by the rising sun, I placed my sackcloth jacket over my face. The rest was naked. The flies in the toilet and the wine-press the soldiers had for their own convenience were gnawing at the barrier wires' edges; they darted forward, leapt over my cock, sunk into the mop of hair below, scuttled over the curly locks, so I trembled, opened my thighs. The morning breeze cooled down the thighs and the sexual mass. The flies stole . . .

Again Véronique tosses her hairs behind her; I take hold of this hair and throw my face into it; Véronique turns around and places my head in her hands:

'Xaintrilles wet-kissed me in the garden.'

I throw my arms around her waist, then I eat at her mouth; revolving, her thighs rub and press themselves against my stomach; though she's pushing back my arms, I kiss her eyelids; her hand rubs my back my waist; her eyelids taste of mud; the sweat wets my opened shirt.

As soon as she laughs, I turn her over under me on the armchair.

The wind bangs the books on the table shut. My hand burrows like a mole in her clothes. Over a teat. Trembles. Under my hand the teat is hot. I stroke the other teat. With the second hand I unhook the dress. And tongue the teat's tip. 'And me,' she pants. She crushes my mouth by her breast. Wide open the windows look over the park. Xaintrilles walks through the thick grass, his gun erect.

'Don't be so hard,' he tells me. 'You're breaking my legs.'

I crawl over him. Sirens stain the distance.

Today there's no more pirates therefore I can't be a pirate. I know I can't be a pirate because there're no more pirate ships.

In 1574 there were pirate ships.

By that time the total halt of legal, or national, European wars forced the French and German soldiers either to disappear or to become illegal — pirates. Being free of both nationalistic and religious concerns and restrictions, privateering's only limitation was economic. Piracy was the most anarchic form of private enterprise.

Thus, at that time, in one sense, the modern economic world began. In anarchic times, when anyone could become any one and thing, corsairs, free enterprisers roamed everywhere more and more . . .

Murderers killed murderers . . .

Human beings are good by nature. This is the credo of those who are liberals, even pacifist, during times of national and nationalistic wars.

But in 1574, when regular, regulated war, that is, national war, which the nations involved had maintained at huge expense only via authoritarian expansion, ceased: the sailors the soldiers the poor people the disenfranchised the sexually different waged illegal wars on land and sea. War, if not the begetter of all things, certainly the hope of all begetting and pleasures. For the rich and especially for the poor. War, you mirror of our sexuality.

I who would have and would be a pirate: I cannot. I who live in my mind which is my imagination as everything — wanderer adventurer fighter Commander-in-chief of Allied forces — I am nothing in these times.□

ROGER WODDIS

Cruel to the Crown

Oh, what could you say on that glorious day,
When her subjects were glued to the page and the screen?
Nothing but 'Cheers!' — 'Did you order twelve beers?' —
'She doesn't look sixty' — and 'Long live the Queen!'

We'd read all the features, we'd seen every shot,
We knew how young Lillibet cooed in her cot —
But how would it be if the cameras weren't there,
And what would she say if she let down her hair?

Away from the fawning, the goo and the gup,
Enough to make even Sue Lawley throw up,
She'd say, when the press and the yes-men had gone,
'I know it's my birthday — but don't they go on?'

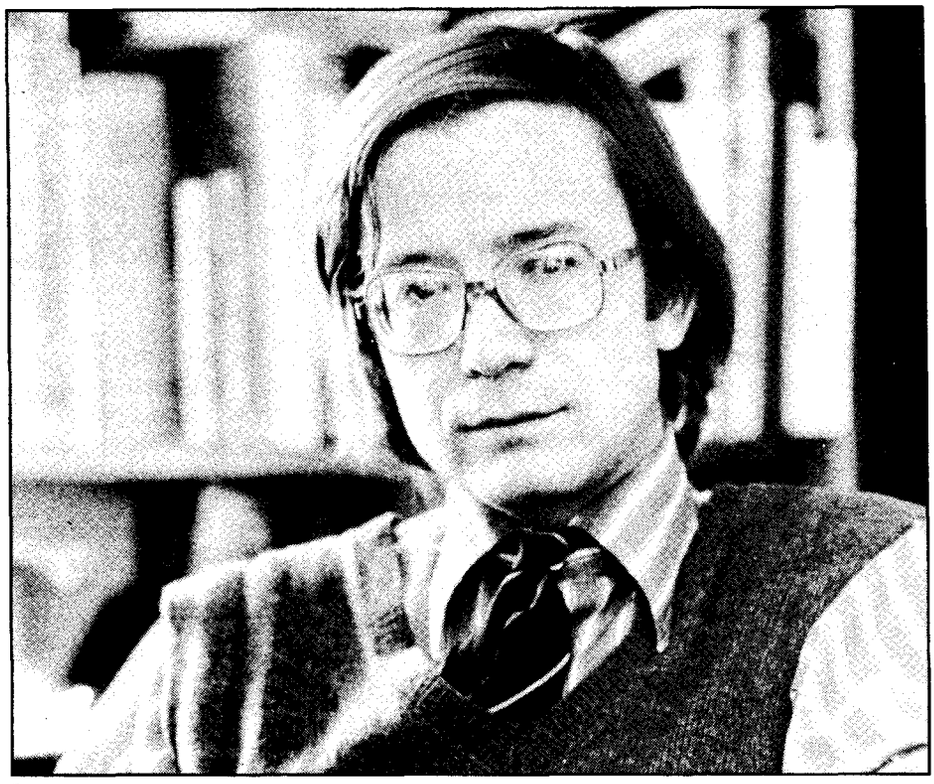
'I'm Head of the Commonwealth, caught in the glare,
My wealth isn't common, my paintings are rare,
But God, I'm so tired of the guards going by
And speeches beginning, "My husband and I . . ." '

'I'm tired of old newsreels, the pomp and the plugs,
The flags and the flogging of souvenir mugs.
I don't blame the tabloids, they're right to cash in,
But honestly, pets, it gets under my skin!'

'Oh, cut out the curtseys, the tourist who gapes,
And give me the day I shook hands with Geoff Capes.
The grease on his gloves had my legs bent in half;
I may be the Queen — but I *do* like to laugh!'

'I'd rather watch horses than look at the news
(And who but a spy could decipher Ted Hughes?).
But what I love least are hysterical mobs
Who march against bombers and shout about jobs.'

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Peter Fuller, 1986 version

Fish self

Geoff Dyer

Marches Past
PETER FULLER *Chatto/Tigerstripe* £9.95

SOMEONE ONCE SAID to me that the odd thing about Peter Fuller is that he takes such evident delight in being disliked. His well known interviews with Anthony Caro and Carl André were brilliant exercises in rubbing sculptors up the wrong way; artists he dislikes — Richard Hamilton, Julian Schnabel — are denigrated in the most vituperative terms; in his articles he has always been happy to quote attacks from opponents whom he regularly tosses and gores in the letters pages of *Art Monthly*.

Most of those who enjoy being disliked find solace in an inordinate fondness for themselves but in Fuller's new book we find that he is 'certainly not enamoured of the Peter Fuller depicted here'. *Here* is the journal which he began on 28 March 1975 and *Marches Past* is made up of cleverly arranged extracts from his entries for 28 and 29 March of the following four years.

When he begins the journal Fuller is 28, in the middle of difficult psychoanalysis and struggling to establish himself as a writer on art. Heavily under the influence of Berger and the heady radicalism of *New Left Review*, he is tormented by Victor Serge's dictum that the only meaning of life lies in conscious participation in the making of history. Quite a problem for a radical intellectual closeted away in his study for hours on end with only memories of public school to compare with Serge's enforced confinement. Not surprisingly then, the journal at this point veers between a stifled yearning for the over-literary ('A jumble of clichés, jostling like fossil sponges in the basket of my head') and terse entries in the style of Berger's Lavin in *A Painter of our Time* ('I was right to opt for *realism* in art, and materialism in my thinking').

By 1978 he is staying in Connecticut with the painter Robert Natkin, is gaining a reputation as an art critic and can see in the birth of his first child an image of his own rebirth through analysis. Throughout the journal there are hints of what will later emerge as considered critical positions but as the book progresses the entries give way to longer disquisitions on psychoanalytic theory and practice, to an abiding preoccupation with his relationship with his father, and to the search for a secular system of thought capable of compensating for the lost theological certainties of the father.

Here Fuller suggests a self-comparison with Edmund Gosse which puts us in mind of a note that sometimes comes through elsewhere in his writings: a sense of self-importance not entirely mitigated by the urgency of the critical project in which he is prolifically engaged. Remarking on the very self-important Mr Elton, Emma Woodhouse comments that there was a kind of parade in his speech that was very apt to incline her to laughter. In similar fashion there is much unintentional humour in young Peter's angst: Berger gives him a copy of Russell Hoban's *Turtle Diary* and Fuller whose axolotl — 'a pampered turd' of a fish — has just died falls to wondering if that was Berger's way of telling him to set free his 'fish-self', to break out of the aquarium of his study and into history . . . Who knows?

Critically, *Marches Past* appears to cause some problems. While he was writing it Fuller thought of the journal as a novel and intermittently refers to it as such. Offering it now as a journal, he admits in the preface that some things in it make him wince every time he reads them. We are not told how extensively the entries have been revised or reworked and this must have been something of a dilemma for Fuller. Growing literary maturity must have militated against leaving everything as it was but too much tampering would have compromised the integrity of the journal as a portrait of the writer as a young would-be. In the end there is something odd about the resulting combination of private and public intentions, like eating at home alone in tuxedo and black tie.

Whether or not *Marches Past* is a novel is of course unimportant; what is certain, however, is that in published form it becomes subject to the same critical scrutiny as any other text offered voluntarily to the public. In this light the overall form and ambitions of *Marches Past* cannot compensate for (let alone turn to advantage) the defects inherent in the original material. (My sense of the inadequacy of the book — and of the amount of work needed to transmute the private into the public — was probably enhanced by reading *Marches Past* in tandem with *The Golden Notebook*.) The real interest of *Marches Past* (especially since many of its ideas have been developed elsewhere) is as source material, as the sort of book published posthumously when, if a writer has achieved a certain status, we are eager to get hold of anything that can supplement the existing texts on which his/her reputation is based. One wonders then about the decision to publish this book at all — which brings us back to Fuller's estimate of himself as a writer. Perhaps it is the case — as, coincidentally, John Berger once suggested to me — that all autobiographical writing, even that preoccupied with a dissatisfied, restless search for identity, comes from a confident, secure sense of the self. □

THAT'S MY DAD
by Ralph Steadman

A child's-eye view of adult features – enormous ears, feet and hundreds of teeth and a twist in the tail: certainly worthy of Britain's most highly acclaimed cartoonist illustrator.

0 86264 133 0 £4.95 Publication: April 24th

ANDERSEN PRESS,
62-65 CHANDOS PLACE, LONDON WC2N 4NW

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Crowded life

Naomi Mitchison

Margaret Cole 1893-1980: A Political Biography
BETTY D. VERNON *Croom Helm* £19.95

MARGARET COLE was someone that everyone on the Left knew about, admired, loved or, at least briefly, hated. She would take enormous pains, be unendingly kind to people who were struggling and needed help; she was a devoted and very capable administrator; she checked her references and sometimes chided me for skidding over mine; she knew Labour politics, past and present, inside out. She had love to spare. But if someone was, in her judgment, lazy or intellectually dishonest, she could bite. As this was common enough to all of us now and then, we were apt to catch it. Both sides of Margaret appeared in the *New Statesman* under earlier editors, Kingsley Martin first. She didn't always agree with its policies.

Few people — very few women — have crowded so much into their lives, in fact have done so much not for themselves but for the cause: socialism as conceived in the totally human terms of 'the poorest He that is in England' — as also the poorest She. On top of all this she loved and was loved; she had three children. And she continually gave strength and comfort, as well, sometimes, as gentle criticism, to her husband Douglas.

Douglas Cole's main books are still required reading. Both he and Margaret were born in the days of the workhouse, the Board School and the hospitals that nobody could wish to enter, the days also of Imperial wars. Those of us who remember even the end of those days know what the welfare state, for all its shortcomings, has done for our country, though now we lag behind those who used to envy us for our social services. So there was Douglas Cole out to fight for the rights of the poor and oppressed, his words like fire, his eyes flashing (I was an 18-year-old meeting attender). Margaret was swept away but swam the current.

When we look back on Guild Socialism, which was being put forward in the Twenties, and for which there were honourable arguments, it may occur to us that a little bit more of that and a little bit less of the immediate virtues of nationalisation might have been a good mix. But it all seems very long ago, in the days of giants: the Webbs, who of course figure a great deal, as towering and beneficent figures, in this book, and also Bernard Shaw, Tawney, Lansbury, Ellen Wilkinson, Gilbert Murray. Are they all totally out of fashion now? That might be a pity.

The Coles were, inevitably, as tangled with the history of the Fabian Society as the Webbs were in their day. But Douglas was, in a sense, a loner; he seldom had the close link with real people that he had with statistics — or Cobbett. Margaret, who had started as a very popular teacher at St Paul's, liked people.

All this comes through in Betty Vernon's book. Her difficulty, though, is partly that she is rather overwhelmed with quotations, especially from Margaret's own autobiographical books, *Growing Up Into Revolution* (does that seem an odd title now?) and *Servant of the People*, which is about working for the LCC. This means a constant sprinkle of quotes, which are apt to trip up the reader. Biographies are a problem. If they are written soon after someone has died it is very hard to get the historical background; the writer is still in it, cannot get a view. Also, they are likely to be swayed by personal grief and affection. The Coles may need another biography a generation on. But at the same time it is important to get some of the evidence while it is still there. Betty has talked with or written to a number of people who knew Margaret well, some of her own generation; she has seen private letters. More importantly she knew Margaret and shared her interests and hopes, especially in the Fabian Society. Inevitably I am in this book; probably most of the reviews will be written by friends or perhaps pupils of Margaret. But the readers will mostly be younger. What will they think? Many of us remember Margaret more vividly than the people we met this morning. If only she had been one of them, what an exciting and probably helpful talk we would have had. □

HISTORY WORKSHOP

New Books

The Worst Street in North London
Campbell Bunk, Islington, Between the Wars
JERRY WHITE
'A more lucid and more penetrating analysis would be hard to imagine ... a most subtle and powerful evocation of life and labour that would have been familiar to Mayhew.' — Jeremy Seabrook, *Guardian*
0-7102-0700-X £8.95

Making Cars
A History of Car Making in Cowley
TELEVISION HISTORY WORKSHOP
Developed out of the successful Channel Four series.
0-7102-0272-5 £5.50

Language, Gender and Childhood
Eds Carolyn Steedman, Cathy Urwin and Valerie Walkerdine 0-7100-9977-0 £8.95

Recent Books

Theatres of the Left 1880 — 1935
Workers' Theatre Movements in Britain
Raphael Samuel, Ewan MacColl and Stuart Cosgrove
0-7100-0901-1 £8.95

Poor Labouring Men
Rural Radicalism in Norfolk 1870 — 1923
Alun Howkins 0-7102-0295-4 £7.95

Culture, Ideology and Politics
Eds Raphael Samuel and Gareth Stedman Jones
0-7100-9433-7 £7.95

People's History and Socialist Theory
Edited by Raphael Samuel 0-7100-0652-7 £7.95

History Workshop Journal
Spring and Autumn. Annual Subscription £11. Single issue £5.95

ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL
14 Leicester Square, London WC2H 7PH

FICTION

Such stuff as dreams

Gillian Wilce

Memoirs of Many in One
PATRICK WHITE *Cape* £8.95
The Limits of Vision
ROBERT IRWIN *Viking* £8.95
The Beast
SHARMAN MACDONALD *Collins* £8.95
The Story of Zahra
HANAN AL-SHAYKH *Quartet* £8.95
Just You Wait and See
STAN BARSTOW *Michael Joseph* £9.95

WHERE ALEX Xenophon Demirjian Gray, Greek widow of an Australian first met in Alexandria, sees a Mystic with a message, her daughter Hilda sees a 'lousy old derro' ferreting through the rubbish. Which is right?

The **Memoirs of Many in One**, to wit Alex herself most obviously, include the Empress Alexandra of Byzantium and Nicaea's social visiting, the nun Cassiani's

Another encounter

Brendan Cleary

What's she doing with that asshole,
I once said. Now she's sitting here with me.
We talk over separations and how much they cost.
I've frayed with years but she still clings
to delicacy. Her fragile wrist reaching for Lager,
then her raised arms speaking deliberate messages.
I notice how the bikers in the corner still want her.
It's plain from the grimace each wears on his face,
she's still in fashion. If I could read their lips
they'd mutter to each other in unkempt voices,
'What's she doing with that asshole.'

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sexual servicing of the monk Onouphrios on the island of Nisos, Sister Benedict's attendance at the Feast of Kippers, Alex Gray's amazing performance as Cleopatra with a touring company in the outback. . . Her identities, not in themselves necessarily alluring, shift and slide, moving now close to, now further from her actual physical being. Meantime, Hilda, 'smiling that little watery smile which masquerades as sincerity in a dutiful daughter', copes with her fractious, unpredictable, senile mother until the day of the final strait-jacket. Hilda keeps factual archives to balance Alex's fantastical memoirs. The astutely observing bits of Alex pick on her daughter's anxieties: 'She is afraid . . . that anyone coming across us might equate her with her "mad mother".'

And there is yet more: the memoirs are edited by elderly writer and friend of the family Patrick 'Bet he blues his hair' White who not only appears in them but comments on them. 'Some of the dramatis personae of this Levantine script could be the offspring of my own psyche' he introduces the memoirs and 'I was Hilda's possession: a bundle of sweaters, flannel shirts, down to the very last and most ignominious layer, those long-leg woollen underpants' he concludes.

The kaleidoscopic truths of the novel do not undercut one another so much as co-exist; Alex's sad, aged tiresomeness (for tiresome she certainly is) and her rich multiplicity, Alex and Hilda, inside and outside, briefly glimpsed gay son Hal, what these things are to and in 'Patrick White' and his inventor, the life of the psyche and the dying of the body — all disturbingly insist on their contradictory realities. It is a *tour de force* of the imagination and about the imagination and therefore an unfair starting point maybe from which to evaluate the work of less tried writers.

Robert Irwin's **The Limits of Vision** suffers particularly from the comparison precisely because it too includes a much-peopled inner life, belonging to dirt-obsessed Marcia who, on the one hand, struggles distractedly through a coffee morning and ends the day weeping on the hall floor and, on the other hand, is engaged in mortal conflict with Mucor, Emperor of Dirt, when not conversing with Teilhard de Chardin in the Gobi Desert or Leonardo da Vinci in the bathroom. It's cleverly executed but wearisome — rather than animating — in its cumulative effect, loaded with intellectual reference where Patrick White can be (apparently) simple, an over-elaborated, one-idea fantasy, in fact, as implied by its relentlessly jokey dustjacket.

Contrariwise, Sharman Macdonald's unpretentious first novel **The Beast** offers more than its slightness initially suggests. The account of one summer picnic day in the London lives of Jade and Roger, Naomi and John and their son is soaked in that lazy sunshine which makes ordinary things strange and strange things ordinary. It is written with graceful economy and manages two relatively rare feats: one to intimate, without sentimentality, possibilities for happiness and the growing of life; the other to create a child who is just as real and just as much part of the story as the adult characters, no more, no less.

Another place, another kind of imagination quicken Hanan Al-Shaykh's **Story of Zahra**, a demanding but powerful realisation of life from inside the head of a passive, disturbed, acne-ed, mistreated Lebanese Shi-ite girl (with brief excursions into the heads of Uncle Hesham exiled in Africa and of Majed, Zahra's short-lived bewildered husband). Zahra, too, is seen as more mad than she experiences herself to be. The novel (banned in some Arab countries) takes you gradually into Zahra's world until you are compelled to share Beirut's 'formerly neutral streets . . . suddenly filled with a spirit of revenge and tension', the alarming presence of Brother Ahmad doped on dope and fighting, her own coming to sexual life in her bizarre affair with a rooftop sniper. While transmitting the sensations of being part of Beirut better than an infinitude of news reports, this imaginative inhabiting of a person formed by a particular and very troubled environment could not be further from documentary.

Just You Wait and See seems, in contrast, more re-created than imagined. Ella Palmer's quiet wrangle with herself about whether she can accept (in the shape of Walter from the Co-op butcher's) what appears to be her fate is overwhelmed by the details of life in a Yorkshire pit village at the beginning of the Second World War. It's craftily and warmly done, but the accuracy is *too* impressive; the lists of what's for tea or which film stars have been seen at the local cinema are likely to set you recalling or visualising customs and times and places rather than being moved or intrigued or extended by the fiction itself. □

CRIME

Whose eyes?

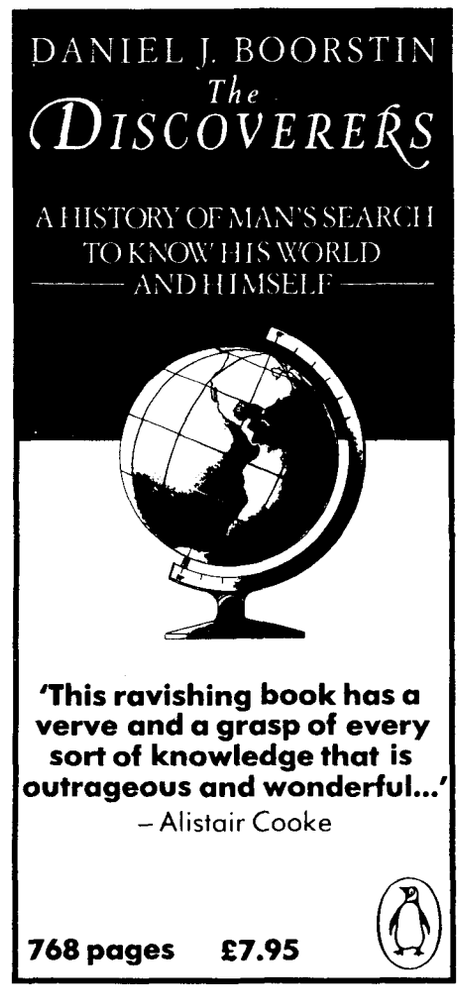
Joan Smith

Killing Orders
SARA PARETSKY *Gollancz* £8.95
Nightlines
JOHN LUTZ *Macmillan* £7.95
At Night All Wolves Are Grey
GUNNAR STAALESEN *Quartet* £8.95
First Hit of the Season
JANE DENTINGER *Gollancz* £8.95
Live Flesh
RUTH RENDELL *Hutchinson* £9.95

IT'S A FUNNY business, the private eye tradition. Given the consummate skill with which the genre has been handled by the three great practitioners — Hammett, Chandler and Macdonald — it's hard to imagine what can be done with it other than to repeat what's already been achieved. Thus it sometimes seems that every private eye is on the verge of going out of business, possesses at least one disgruntled ex-wife and has the physique to withstand the equivalent of ten rounds with Frank Bruno. Some authors attempt a contemporary feel by throwing in the odd reference to cruise missiles or Ronald Reagan, but usually it's the same old theme rehashed.

One of the rare exceptions to this generalisation is P. D. James's Cordelia Gray, whose success lies in her contrast to her predecessors — she is young, inexperienced, English and female. And P. D. James has not failed to grasp that the private eye tradition is essentially a *political* one, setting the values of the lone detective against the materialism and corruption of the world in which he or she operates. And at long last I have found another such, Sara Paretsky's female private eye from Chicago, V. I. Warshawski.

Killing Orders is Paretsky's third novel featuring Victoria, or Vic, Warshawski, but it is the one with which she has shouldered her way through to the front rank of American crime writers with a front-page interview in the *New York Times Review of Books*. Deservedly so; Paretsky has done something new. Her achievement lies in the creation, in Vic, of a wholly successful character whose like I have not encountered before. She is tough, shrewd, intelligent, a feminist and all these characteristics are conveyed with the very lightest of touches — there are no discordant diatribes on sexual politics here. If Paretsky endows Vic with a new lover, or sends her to see a friend who happens to be a lesbian, or involves her in a discussion with a priest on abortion politics, she does it in a manner which never forgets that this is above all a crime novel. And the plot is first-class: called in by an embittered aunt to investigate the theft of three million dollars in share certificates from the safe of the local Catholic


DANIEL J. BOORSTIN
The DISCOVERERS
A HISTORY OF MAN'S SEARCH TO KNOW HIS WORLD AND HIMSELF
'This ravishing book has a verve and a grasp of every sort of knowledge that is outrageous and wonderful...'
– Alistair Cooke
768 pages £7.95

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

priory, Vic finds herself embroiled in murder, high finance, Vatican politics, the Mafia and the Calvi scandal. Sara Paretsky's book is not only a joy to read; it restores politics to its rightful place in the mainstream private eye novel, and in doing so revitalises the tradition.

John Lutz's **Nightlines**, on the other hand, is exactly the sort of thing I was complaining about above. On the evidence of this book, Lutz has nothing to offer the private eye novel other than a hefty dollop of misogyny and the result is a very unpleasant book indeed. His aptly-named detective, an ex-cop called Nudger, is hired by a woman whose twin sister has just been despatched in a particularly brutal fashion. The dead woman, he is told, had been making assignations with unknown men through the secret telephone lines used at night by (I quote the blurb) 'the lonely, desperate and sometimes perverted population of St Louis'. As the seedy Nudger is drawn into this world, he meets several nasty men and some even nastier women. The characters are stereotypes, the plot risible; the solution requires an unshakeable belief in women as the guilty daughters of Eve.

It is a relief to turn from Lutz's unprepossessing novel to that of a Norwegian writer, Gunnar Staalesen. His detective, Varg Veum — the name is a play on the Norwegian phrase for 'outlaw', is a linear descendant of Philip Marlowe, but has at least been endowed with an excellent plot. The book also benefits from the freshness of its setting — a dark and desperate Norway haunted by its wartime past. Through a chance meeting with an elderly cop, Veum re-opens two unsolved cases: an arson attack on a paint factory in 1953 and the murder of a suspected Gestapo informer nearly 20 years later. I unreservedly recommend **At Night All Wolves Are Grey**.

Turning from tough guys to the world of amateur detectives — Jane Dentinger's second crime novel, **First Hit of the Season**, has a great deal to recommend it. Dentinger is a New York actress and she sensibly sticks with what she knows: her chief character, Jocelyn O'Rourke, acts on Broadway. Her victim, Jason Saylis, is a particularly vituperative theatre critic — a satisfying case of the biter bit. The tone of the novel is light-hearted and some of the characters less than fully drawn, but I look forward to more books by a writer who shows considerable promise.

Ruth Rendell, on the other hand, is at the peak of her powers. In **Live Flesh**, she pulls off what is to this reader a dazzling coup — the creation of a rapist who remains, for a large part of the novel, a sympathetic character. The book starts with the shooting of David Fleetwood, a young detective sergeant, by Victor Jenner, a rapist on the run from the police. The obvious way to write this novel would have been to tell it through the eyes of the crippled policeman; Rendell takes the bolder path of getting inside the mind of Jenner. The steps by which he creates a relationship with the man he has condemned to life in a wheelchair are handled with meticulous care, as is his acceptance by Fleetwood's initially hostile girl-friend. *Live Flesh* is a frightening, resonant novel — an extraordinary achievement. □

GREAT VALUE . . .

Every quarter the Poetry Book Society ransacks publishers' lists to bring you the best of the new poetry titles **all at discount**.

In return for your annual subscription of £15.50 you receive

● four quarterly **Choices**, selected by Jonathan Barker, Arts Council Poetry Librarian, and poet and critic Gillian Clarke ● the chance to buy at discount from our quarterly lists of **Recommendations** ● the quarterly **PBS Bulletin**, packed with special articles, poems and previews ● our exclusive 96pp **Winter Poetry Supplement**, edited by Jonathan Barker ● an immediate **extra-special offer** for new members only ● access to all our other **special book offers** ● an introductory free gift of Ted Hughes' and Seamus Heaney's acclaimed anthology **The Rattle Bag** (published price £5.95) or a **£4.00 PBS book voucher**

THAT'S AT LEAST **£27.00** IN VALUE FOR YOUR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION OF £15.50 – *AN UNBEATABLE BARGAIN!*

Write for full details to Membership Department, Poetry Book Society, 21 Earls Court Square, London SW5 9DE

POETRY BOOK SOCIETY

. . . GREAT BOOKS!

Sandwich course

Peter Forbes

Memoir of a Thinking Radish
PETER MEDAWAR *Oxford* £12.50

THREE EPIGRAPHS and an introduction declare Sir Peter Medawar's intention not to produce that tedious object, a scientific autobiography: 'It was indeed a special wish not to claim for myself as author any distinction more extravagant than membership of the human race.' And yet, a scientific autobiography it is, complete with the faults listed in his epigraphs.

Sir Peter admits at one point to being a 'managing-director type', and much of the book does indeed read like the supremo's annual report: 'I enjoyed giving my lectures at Harvard and was pleased that they were well received.' And there is a ponderous, humourless quality about his reflections on art — he once had the temerity to ask Eliot to name his personal greatest novel in the English language, and was much put out to be told that it was Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*.

But it is the science that matters. Sir Peter is engagingly honest about the relative unimportance of his early work, a necessary phase before discovering his métier: 'A scientist who wants to do something original and important must experience, as I did, some kind of shock that forces upon his intention the kind of problem that it should be his duty and will become his pleasure to investigate.'

For Medawar the shock consisted of having a bomber crash near his home — an airman escaped with 60 per cent burns and Dr John Barnes urged Medawar to investigate the possibility of treating him by skin grafting. The phenomenon of one tissue rejecting another gave Medawar his principal subject: immunology.

Medawar's major work, for which he won the Nobel Prize in 1960, was the discovery of acquired immunological tolerance. He had rashly suggested, at a conference in 1948, that skin grafts between identical twins would take, while those between non-identical twins would fail. Challenged to demonstrate this, he discoyered that, in cattle, grafts between *all* twins took. The reason for this is that non-identical cattle twins share the placenta, and hence exchange blood. This suggested that the immune response was still undeveloped in the foetus and that inoculation with the cells of another animal would provide tolerance to the cells of that animal in adult life. This proved to be so and dispelled the gloom that had hung round the whole question of skin grafts between unrelated individuals, although the technique could not itself be applied to human beings.

For someone who has contributed so much to medical knowledge, Sir Peter has been cruelly afflicted by illness. Undiagnosed hypertension and overwork led, in 1969, to a massive cerebral haemorrhage from which he recovered slowly. Further attacks occurred in 1980 and 1982. His account of these disasters is bravely good-humoured and stoically wise. The last attack took his left eye, leaving him with a plastic replacement, 'not quite a perfect match in colour, because the "beer-bottle brown with a merry twinkle" I had specified could not easily be matched.'

Memoir of a Thinking Radish is loosely constructed, with numerous flashbacks, few dates and many passages of opinion which emerge awkwardly from the narrative. The subheadings are often inappropriate: for example, a section entitled *Honoris causa*, in which he ruminates on 'the diverting indoor pastime' of collecting an A to Z of honorary degrees, continues for page after page with an account of his (much more important) early work on skin grafting. This opinion-sandwich style, although deliberate ('This, then, is a book of opinions which my life can be regarded as a pretext for holding'), is irritating, especially when the opinions are sometimes as trite as 'The Peculiar Awfulness of Gilbert and Sullivan'.

Medawar is at his best in books like *The Art of the Soluble* and *Advice to a Young Scientist*, where his opinions are delivered neat and cut through so much sloppy thinking about science. In writing an autobiography, he is going against his natural grain and the result is neither fish nor fowl, like the book's title, which unsuccessfully tries to yoke together Pascal's 'thinking reed' and Falstaff's 'forked radish'. The result does not have the force of a real phrase: it remains an oddity. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FILMS

More shadow than light

Adam Mars-Jones

Caravaggio
Lumière

IT WOULD BE ONLY a small additional irony in Derek Jarman's career if his study of the painter *Caravaggio* was used as an example to justify the meagreness of grants given to film-makers. The film was made for less than half a million pounds (provided by the BFI and Channel Four) at a studio in Limehouse, and the texture and tonality of its images are admirably achieved.

This silk purse of a film may be used to excuse other sow's-ear budgets, but the heroism it takes to see such a project into the world shouldn't be compulsory and, after *The Tempest,* Jarman should have had nothing more to prove.

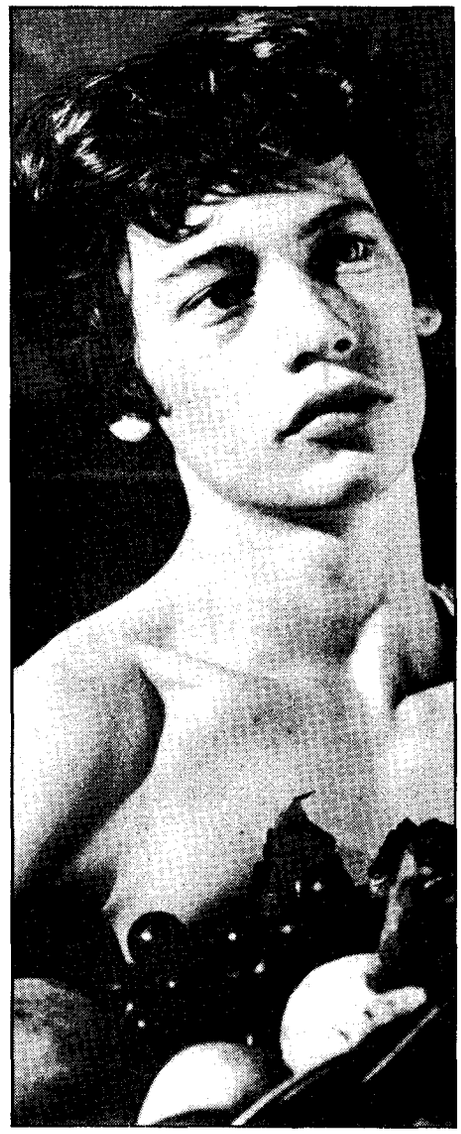
Jarman takes full advantage of the freedoms a marginal project can enjoy, but he remains fastidious even when he is being irreverent and fantastical. The Pope may giggle, grandees in period costume may use typewriters or calculators, but the mood is never actually broken. The problem with the film is only that the mood is not an appropriate one.

Caravaggio's fascination lies in an extremity of temperament which can be glimpsed in the work and in what is known of the life. This element is strongly realised in the character of young Caravaggio (Dexter Fletcher), amoral and almost alarmingly alive. As Nigel Terry plays him, and as Jarman directs, the mature Caravaggio has lost all that dynamism. The strongest factor in his temperament seems to be melancholy.

The motto on Caravaggio's knife reads *Nec Spe Nec Metu:* Without Hope Or Fear. Carried by the young Caravaggio, the motto is equivalent to a punk's neck-tattoo reading No Future. For the mature Caravaggio, it is a watchword of stoicism.

It's hard to know if this discontinuity is intended. The film works as a series of tableaux, recollected or imagined by the dying Caravaggio; important facts can be omitted without affecting the stately, contemplative pace of the images. When for instance we first see the young Caravaggio, he is accompanied by an ambiguous pimp figure. Towards the end of the film, we can identify this figure as Pasqualone, proclaimed by Caravaggio in his monologues to have been the love of his life. So what happened to him?

It may be that over the seven years of the project's growth, Jarman became so inward with the known facts that he overestimated the number of narrative vertebrae that could be removed from the film and still leave it with a spine. But the frailness of the narrative mainly affects parts of the film that Jarman has made up.



Dexter Fletcher as the young Caravaggio

Some of the inventions are eminently effective. Jarman provides Caravaggio with a mute servant called Jerusaleme (Spencer Leigh) who brings the film much sweetness. He is often shown holding a reflective panel to illuminate the figures posing for Caravaggio and his character serves the film in the same way, bouncing a tender light into corners that would otherwise be underlit.

But with his invention of a central emotional triangle Jarman seriously unbalances his film. Caravaggio becomes infatuated with a gambler and boxer called Ranuccio (Sean Bean), whose lover is a prostitute called Lena (Tilda Swinton). One problem is that Sean Bean's looks are a little bland to be the focus of an obsession, particularly as Caravaggio has no lack of male company.

At first, Caravaggio is obsessed with Ranuccio, and Ranuccio plays along. But his interest too is quickened and Lena gets jealous. Caravaggio placates her, seems even to win her over, by hiring her a beautiful dress for a party. At the party Lena makes an influential conquest. Later, pregnant, she proposes to move in with this conquest, leaving Caravaggio and Ranuccio to each other. (For some reason, Jarman concentrates on Ranuccio's reactions to this announcement, not Caravaggio's.) Soon after, she is killed, and when Caravaggio eventually finds out that Ranuccio is to blame, he kills him.

It's fair enough that we have to take as read the intensity of Caravaggio's desire for Ranuccio; but his retrospective love for Lena is completely unprepared for. They have only one scene together, when he paints her as the Magdalen, and then there are no indications of primary emotion.

What Jarman shows us when Caravaggio kills his lover is not a nihilist or even a stoic but a moralist. The extremity of temperament, the willingness to dare all for passion, has oddly been displaced onto Ranuccio and the smell of sulphur which must first have attracted Jarman to Caravaggio has given way almost to incense.

If ever a film needed to be unrepentant psychodrama, with a headlong narrative push and a hysterical, all but immolatory sexuality, it was *Caravaggio*. Instead Jarman has crafted a sombre mood-piece.

Only one scene gives a hint of what might have been. Caravaggio is painting Ranuccio, while Lena and Jerusaleme yawn and doze. Next to his pigments Caravaggio keeps a pile of gold coins, which he tosses to Ranuccio one by one when his pose begins to falter. Ranuccio puts the coins in his mouth. Then the tempo begins to speed up: the cutting becomes energetic and we get close-ups of paint-mixing and of brush-strokes, while on the soundtrack the clinking of coins accelerates. Finally Caravaggio puts a coin in his own mouth and stands up against Ranuccio. Unblinking, Ranuccio takes the coin with his tongue and tucks it clanking away with the others. It's the only moment in the film that makes you sit up, not back. □

John Coleman is ill. His column will be back next week.

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

A Room with a View Palpable hit by uncommonly literate-visual Ivory-Merchant-Jhabvala trinity, exquisitely matching their meet to Forster's 1908 barbed, poised, pagan and wittily resonant shake-up of class-crossing Edwardian amour, via Florentine trip, for awakened young Lucy (Helena Bonham Carter, Maggie Smith, Denholm Elliott, Daniel Day Lewis).

No Surrender Liverpudlian black stuff, seamed with horror and hilarity, as Alan Bleasdale's vivid OAPs, rival Protestants and Catholics, are misbooked into sleazy, crook-owned club with harassed new manager (Michael Angelis) for New Year's Eve celebrations and confrontations. Peter Smith directs (Bernard Hill, Joanne Whalley, Ray McAnally).

Clockwise Zany any-road movie début by prime farceur Michael Frayn, writing time-obsessed comprehensive head John Cleese into calamity-strewn race to Norwich conference, driven in dad's car — and out of and into his wits — by truant girl pupil, towards higher-lunacy finale. (Sharon Maiden, Alison Steadman).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THEATRE

Winning streak

Benedict Nightingale

The Gambler
PETER BREWIS, BOB GOODY & MEL SMITH
Hampstead
The Beaux' Stratagem
FARQUHAR *Lyric, Hammersmith*

IMAGINE ONE of the Hull Truck company's recent studies of pop culture and the leisure business, but minus the geniality, minus the relentless cheerfulness. Indeed, imagine it rewritten by a collaboration between Steven Berkoff, he of the angry imagination and robust bodily invention, and Stephen Poliakoff, he of the cool anthropological eye. The result wouldn't be greatly dissimilar to the musical entertainment triumphantly ensconced at Hampstead Theatre Club. It was, come to think of it, about time that our theatre took a look at what's virtually the only growth industry in our Britain, the one involving horses and dogs, bookmakers and punters, racketeers and their victims. **The Gambler** brings flair, verve and precision to that overdue task.

Right from the start the four-man cast — Mel Smith, Bob Goody, Philip Davis, Paul Bown — is energetically switching from role to role. On go big, thick-rimmed specs and they're barmaids, frantically watering the throng between races at Sandown, Epsom or wherever. Off they come and they're tic-tac men or bookies hollering the odds. On go dark glasses and they're hoods, impassively but implacably pursuing defaulters on debts. One shoves a cap on his head, sinks to his knees and is a pint-sized jockey; and the three others thrust their kneebones forward, lean backwards and bray, in rough imitation of the nobs in the paddock. Without technical swank, or indeed much physical ado, they successfully catch the atmosphere and suck the audience into it.

Nor is this just atmosphere for atmosphere's sake. The idea is to add authenticity to a cautionary tale about an exemplary gambler or, to be more precise, gambloholic. Lionel Turner — as unsentimentally played by Goody, a sticky-fingered infant given to gangling swagger and petty bluster — doesn't let the impending collapse of his fur business interfere with his obsession. On the contrary, he's silly putty in the hands of the more professional Alex Loach, in Mel Smith's performance a podgy smoothie who can't enter a pub without inveigling his companion to bet on the number of people in it, or even drink without laying tempting odds on the quantity of ice in the glass. In the company of this improbable Mephistopheles, Lionel moves from race-meeting to dog-track to casino to a game of private cards with the hard core, winning and losing and winning again, only to lose the lot in a coolly theatrical denouement. It looks as if he'll end in roughly the same predicament as the weak friend he's refused to save from a savage beating and, maybe, murder.

The evening has its weaknesses, the sort one should expect when a piece aspires to be a moral fable. Why, for instance, not merely provide Lionel with a wife and daughter for him ostentatiously to neglect, but insist that it's actually the child's birthday and show him handing a bookie the money set aside for her gift? That seems rather heavily and obviously to underline the point, that betting men damage more than themselves. Still, such things do happen — didn't the great Dostoevsky pawn his wife's ring and gamble the proceeds? — and do serve to remind us that little if anything is beneath someone so abjectly in the grip of his monomania. The proof of the evening's gathering plausibility and absolute conviction at the close came when, after hours spent poised over the gaming tables and roulette wheels, Lionel faced his last big temptation. Would he risk all on the turn of a single coin? It wasn't just he who was helplessly gasping 'no, please, don't, I want to stop' at the bland and impervious Loach. I'll swear that some members of the audience were repeating his words, so wrapped up were they in his plight and (vicariously) their own.

Any **Beaux' Stratagem** home-grown in London still has to subject itself to comparison with the National's revival a decade or so ago: no small challenge, given the subtle observation and mellow humour William Gaskill managed to find in Farquhar's tale of the two young rips who came to Lichfield in search of love, loot or (preferably) both at once. Peter James's production at the Lyric neither flunks this test nor passes it with flying colours. It's an adequate enough reminder of the quality of the writing, but remarkable only for the fine and forthright Mrs Sullen we get from Anna Carteret.

No wonder her husband, Ken Stott's glumly mumbling Sullen, finds her too much to tolerate. He's an ordinary fellow, given to the 18th-century equivalents of quaffing Fosters lager and watching *Match of the Day* and here

Who Knows Where the Time Goes
SANDY DENNY *Island Records*
SDSP 100 (4 LPs)
Only 30 when she died, Sandy Denny had, by 1977, made a seminal contribution to English folk rock as a traditional singer and singer-songwriter whom it is not fanciful to compare with Joni Mitchell. It is mostly Sandy the writer we hear in this scrupulously and imaginatively assembled commemorative set, but each stage of her career and the versatility of her talent is well caught by producers Joe Boyd and Trevor Lucas. A lot of the material is available here for the first time. There's been no ghoulish, opportunistic grubbing among the archives, though; every track is outstanding, whether retrieved from radio performances, demo tapes, concerts or the albums themselves. Since the material isn't organised chronologically, the set is beautifully paced and varied: Sandy, with Fairport, tackling 'Tam Lin' head on; Sandy alone with guitar or piano, her flat, wistful voice doing mighty justice to one of her own songs. Not a collection to be missed — especially if you think you don't like folk music.

Golden Golden
SILLY WIZARD *REL*
This is the second in-concert recording from the Scots band's last American tour. Produced primarily to accompany the gigs in a country that has taken their mixture of tender sentiment and instrumental verve to its bosom, the album contains little new, but, in the less complex arrangements necessitated by the absence of overdub facilities, the instrumentals and songs bear renewed attention.

The eponymous 'Golden Golden' is the track of the album. It demonstrates Andy M. Stewart's uncanny ability to write in the traditional idiom. A simple love song with a swell to its tune and emotional sweep in the lyric, it is here rendered with deftly chiselled guitar accompaniment and roseate synthesiser under Stewart's crooning brogue. There's also the fiddling of Johnny Cunningham to enjoy once again. His contribution was perhaps undervalued before he left the band to live in America. He was soon missed. Reunited with his brother Phil and the others, he helps renovate the conventions of Scottish country dance music. A great band in great form — but one pines for a new studio album.

Steamboat Valley Blues
ROY ACUFF *Rounder Special Series*
SS 23
Ally Bain's recent C4 series (and the accompanying Lismor Records which are excellent) focused attention on the better sort of country music. Anyone wishing to work back either from an interest in folk or commercial C & W to that brand of rural American popular music could do no better than to grab any of this series of Rounder reissues.

This one rescues Acuff from the vaults of CBS and restores to us some fine and innovative playing from the Thirties — country music with the rhinestones scraped off. Blues, jazz and ragtime get more than a look in. And the sentimentality and emotional triteness can at least plead sincerity in mitigation — beguilingly tuneful sincerity, too. The sound quality wears its years lightly. Within the limitations of the genre, this is a classic recording and one that ought to win friends outside the country corner.

Donny O'Rourke

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he is, married to the 18th-century equivalent of Mrs Pankhurst. With her upright carriage, her chin thrust defiantly out, her cool smile, her articulate speech, her general air of confident authority, she's several miles out of his league; and yet far from invulnerable or unfeeling. Carteret is probably at her best when she's giving voice to Farquhar's belief that unhappy marriage violates nature and therefore that divorce is a fundamental human right; but she can sigh for a man, even quiver and quaver a bit, and still seem perfectly consistent. If her performance isn't as rich, as intricate as Maggie Smith's back at the National, it's a more plausibly passionate one. □

MUSIC

Gentrification

Charles Fox

Ragtime's progress from brothel to concert hall, as illustrated by The London Ragtime Orchestra at the Barbican, isn't as strange as it seems

AUDIENCES CAN TELL you a lot about an event. And the audience that packed the Barbican Hall last week had little in common with those that troop to hear Miles Davis or Loose Tubes. A few daring spirits clapped individual solos during the jazz numbers, but this was predominantly an audience that applauded — enthusiastically, even vociferously — in the proper place, at the end, just as they would for Beethoven or Mahler.

Something similar happened a dozen or more years ago when I presented a series about ragtime on Radio Three. Ecstatic letters poured in from listeners who had switched on early for the evening symphony concert, only to find themselves overhearing Joplin rags. It was a period that saw Joshua Rifkin performing Joplin at the Queen Elizabeth Hall (he did so again only a few weeks ago): 'He makes the rags sound like Schumann,' grumbled one ragtime expert. The market broadened — temporarily at least — with the onset of *The Sting*, a film that counterpointed a 1920s plot with tunes of two decades earlier.

Yet Joplin's centenary (he was born in 1868) passed without any sort of commotion. And during the years between his death in 1917 and the renaissance of the 1970s the classic piano rag remained something of a curiosity. A few — the indestructible 'Maple Leaf Rag', for instance — got adopted by jazz musicians. But those jazz pianists who rediscovered ragtime in the 1940s all too often tried to make the music swing or drive rather than settling for the lilt that is the essence of what Joplin was up to.

Latterday revivalists have a lot in common with Early Music buffs. Sometimes — with Keith Nichols's Ragtime Orchestra, for example — piano rags transcribed for a small band get beefed-up with solos that are appropriate yet brand-new. The London Ragtime Orchestra, however, jointly led by the pianist, Ray Smith, and the clarinettist, Dick Cook, adopt a more purist approach, very intent upon staying in period. They even dress up to match.

That instinct for decorum is not so out of place as the music's past might lead one to suspect. The bordellos of St Louis and New Orleans, where ragtime flourished, did at least go in for the furbelows of gentility along with the tinkling bead curtains and the whiff of patchouli. Perhaps the genuine vulgarity of the ragtime era came across in the songs rather than the rags, those pieces that Tin Pan Alley rushed out to capitalise on the craze. Sousa's band may have played a cakewalk at the Paris Exposition of 1900, but Britons, during the years before World War I, associated ragtime with songs such as 'Everybody's Doing It' or 'Alexander's Ragtime Band', a tune remarkable for having scarcely a syncopated bar in its entire length. The London Ragtime Orchestra did not venture into this territory. The programme revolved instead around three vital figures in Afro-American music: Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton and A. J. Piron.

Joplin excelled at making his melodies float within the tight disciplines of the four- or five-strain rag. Essentially as pianistic as a Chopin waltz, they gain next to nothing from being scored for a small orchestra. Indeed, that translation imports a perspective of nostalgia that may distract from the music's merit. Nevertheless, a piece such as 'The Cascades', paralleling the sensational water effects at the St Louis Exposition of 1904, works neatly.

Jelly Roll Morton took the rag as a basis for what, in his hands, was jazz. As well as writing tunes he became the first composer of orchestral jazz. So the Ragtime Orchestra recreated 'Black Bottom Stomp' more or less as Morton's Red Hot Peppers recorded it in 1926.

Lying somewhere between Joplin's ragtime and the out-and-out jazz of Morton was the music of A. J. Piron, a New Orleans Creole, like Morton, and leader of an orchestra that prided itself on its 'musical refinement' (a typical photograph of the band shows the leader, a sheet of manuscript paper in his hand, explaining some subtlety in the score). Sedateness prevailed, yet most of the band's recordings concluded with at least a chorus of fairly loose improvising.

Recreating Piron's music is valuable, but as an historic act, documentation rather than art. Doing the same for Jelly Roll Morton is trickier: the sublimity of the classic Red Hot Peppers recordings simply cannot be matched. Revivalism works best with Joplin, his ideas all there in the sheet music, capable of being adapted — for better or for worse. And as a composer who yearned for wider cultural acceptance, Joplin would have welcomed hearing his music in a concert hall rather than a

Theatre

NATIONAL THEATRE 01-928 2252 Olivier (open stage) **'A Chorus of Disapproval'**, **'Pravda A Fleet Street Comedy'**. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) **'Love For Love'**, **'Brighton Beach Memoirs'**. Cottesloe (small auditorium) **'Only 14 Lines'**, **'The Road To Mecca'**, **'Down Cemetary Road'**. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY 01-628 8795/638 8891 24 hr info 628 2295.

BARBICAN THEATRE **'The Merry Wives of Windsor'** (25-26 April returns 16 May). **'Troilus & Cressida'** (from 1 May). **'Mephisto'** by Ariane Mnouchkine (returns 9 May).

THE PIT **'Philistines'** by Maxim Gorky (25-26 April, returns 16 May). **'Real Dreams'** by Trevor Griffiths (from 30 April). **Il Candelaio** by Giordano Bruno (returns 9 May).

BILLBOARD

REAL DREAMS
A NEW PLAY BY TREVOR GRIFFITHS
FROM 30 APRIL
BRITISH PREMIÈRE
IN 1969 A GROUP OF YOUNG, WHITE RADICALS COMMIT THEMSELVES TO THE CAUSE OF THIRD WORLD REVOLUTION IN THE USA.
NOT SUITABLE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN
RSC
THE PIT, BARBICAN
01.628 8795/638 8891

OFF STAGE DOWNSTAIRS 37 Chalk Farm Road NW1. Tel 01-267 9649. Must end 27 April Tues-Sun 8pm **Ronald Ribman's** award winning play **'Cold Storage'**. *'Expert playing'*, The Guardian. *'Definitely worth seeing,'* City Limits. *'Unsentimental direction . . . superb performances,'* Time Out.

BLOOMSBURY THEATRE 01-387 9629 Until 3 May 7.30pm Mon-Sat **SHARED EXPERIENCE** in **MIKE ALFREDS'S** production of **THE THREE SISTERS** by Chekhov.

Exhibition

CAFE GALLERY, by the pool, Southwark Park, London SE16 01-232 2170/232 1230. 11am–6pm Wed–Sun (closed Mon/Tues). Wed 7 May–Sun 25 May LOUISE SHERIDAN *'HEAVEN ON EARTH'* painted collage.

Poetry

OUTPOSTS POETRY QUARTERLY. Poems invited for future issues & 1986 Poetry Competition (prizes £1,000). For details SAE to Outposts, 72 Burwood Rd, Walton on Thames.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

brothel or honky-tonk. He, at least, would have felt at home among the earnest crowd at the Barbican. But he would also, one hopes, have been pleased that, unlike Joshua Rifkin, the pianist Ray Smith obeyed the directions on the score of 'The Ragtime Dance' and sedulously stamped his foot on the floor. □

ART

Hollow men

John Spurling

It's no good changing the catalogue-speak if the works themselves are still entangled in vacuous, modern self-consciousness — as this year's Hayward Annual, 'Falls the Shadow', reveals

'BETWEEN the idea/And the reality . . . Between the emotion/And the response/Falls the Shadow'. We are in a familiar place. Sixty-one years after he first alighted on it, the Hayward Annual is again perching on Eliot's knife-edge between life and art.

This exhibition, organised for the Arts Council by an artist/academic, Jon Thompson, and Barry Barker, the Director of the John Hansard Gallery, Southampton, is full of good intentions. It's the first Hayward Annual to include foreign as well as British artists — 19 of the former, 13 of the latter — with the aim of exploring affinities — or, in Arts Council jargon, 'current concerns' — between British and European contemporaries. Americans are specifically excluded, on the grounds that they have dominated art since the Fifties with their 'financial and entrepreneurial power' and 'the appropriating zeal of the New York art market' and have also 'shaped and legitimised precisely those "modernist" tendencies which we, in mounting this exhibition, have most set our faces against'. The organisers have been particularly anxious not only to counter 'modernism', which they see as 'some kind of international game,' but also to escape from the art-historical approach endemic to international museums. They want us to respond to the works for themselves and for their differences, whether national or individual, rather than as examples of some homogeneous style or theme.

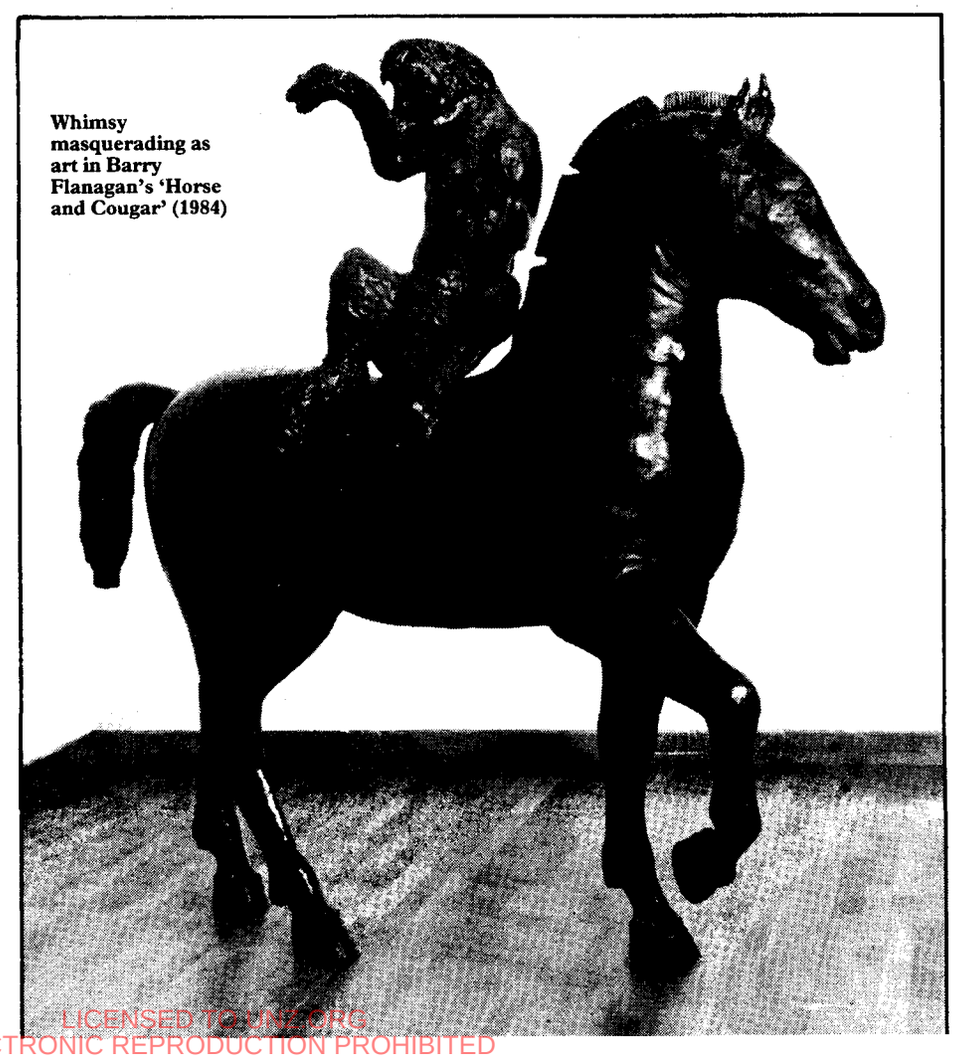
Yet, as the title of the exhibition suggests, there is a distinct theme, expressed in the two complementary catalogue essays. Thompson, using quotations from Rilke, Rimbaud and Mallarmé as well as from Eliot, writes about the creation of a work of art, calling it 'a state of erotic fixation . . . a profound form of self-forgetting, an out-flowing and a fusion'. Barker, citing a self-portrait by Reynolds and quoting Baudelaire, writes about art's reception by the spectator and remarks that 'the experience of the shadow can feel more real than the substance'.

The trouble is that none of this takes us very far from either 'modernism' or the 'contemporary museum culture', which are simply the outward patterns imposed by critics and art-historians on this by now thoroughly worked-over and increasingly tedious subject of the relationship of life to art and art to art. It wouldn't matter what Thompson and Barker wrote in the catalogue or what hazy title they gave to their exhibition, if they had found something to exhibit which really did deserve a fresh reception by the spectator. As it is, virtually every artist in the show and certainly every British one — except the long-dead Bomberg — belongs to that band of fashionable front-runners for international events, whose work might as well carry a label reading 'Tate Gallery approved' and a guarantee of investment potential from one of the smart commercial galleries that markets them: Anthony d'Offay, Waddington, Lisson, Nigel Greenwood. What Thompson and Barker have actually done, for all their fine talk about creativity and receptivity, is only further to reinforce the qualifications of these particular artists for their places at the top of the art institutions' lists.

Nevertheless, the exhibition does have a negative value, in that its ambitious and academic theme points up very accurately, indeed pitilessly, the threadbare nature of these works. They are truly shadows, giving themselves neither to art nor life but floating weightlessly between the two, with only the occasional theatrical effect — a set of numbers in blue neon; a row of chunky glass joints of meat in chunky glass dishes on a white tablecloth; an elaborate installation enabling a swinging Sword of Damocles to shave the top of a heap of earth or pigment — to offset the general impression of weary self-consciousness, nervous pastiche and barren grandiosity. One can distinguish certain national characteristics — a camp stylishness in the Italians, a sort of forced brutality in the Germans, a pallid whimsicality in the British — which seem almost as predictable and bogus as those peddled by tourist brochures. This is, after all, a kind of very exclusive tourist art, made for museum officials, international salesmen and Arts Council selectors.

But although there is no overall visual style, there is an underlying homogeneity of approach, a cold and tight evasiveness, as of somebody afraid to open his/her mind to you in case you should find it empty and taking refuge in aphorisms, gestures and provocative inanities. In fact it is so much a matter of 'here we go round the prickly pear' that one is almost tempted to believe that Thompson and Barker deliberately chose these works to expose the hollowness of their pretensions.

Two British examples can stand for the rest. Barry Flanagan exhibits large bronze animals — a child's story-book elephant and a classical horse with a monkey-like cougar sitting on its back — which are simply inflated versions of those little china 'whimsies' you can buy in souvenir shops. Richard Hamilton offers soft-focus landscapes with lounging female figures and paints in rolls of toilet-paper in the foreground. 'What is important,' writes Barker, 'is the underlying significance of the spectators' relationship to the work on view and how responsive and imaginative they are prepared to be.' I am not convinced that even the most responsive and imaginative spectator can turn a blown-up whimsy or a spoof commercial into a good reason for visiting an art gallery. □



Whimsy masquerading as art in Barry Flanagan's 'Horse and Cougar' (1984)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Union trouble

Naseem Khan

IT SOUNDED a great idea when it started, a pioneering link between the trade union world and the arts world: an arts development officer funded by both constituencies with a generous budget to make events happen and observer status on the TUC. No wonder that the planning group in Lancashire had that heady sense of new frontiers being broached. But new frontiers turn out all too often to be the old barriers with different signs up and so it proved on this occasion.

The story of Rick Gwilt's two and a half years as the first arts development officer ever to be employed by the trade union movement was touched on in Work in Progress last summer (*NS* 21 June 1985). Clare Higney's report '. . . Not a Bed of Roses' (*Gulbenkian Foundation* £1.50 + 40p p&p) delves far deeper into it all. And, much as she stresses the achievements of Gwilt's post, a sad story it makes. From the beginning there was confusion. The trade union sponsorship on which the planning group had relied proved to be non-existent. Observer status on the TUC proved to be unconstitutional. And, although the idea was saved by funding from the Gulbenkian Foundation and the regional arts association, North West Arts, the money was far tighter than anyone had ever envisaged.

When eventually Rick Gwilt was appointed, under the aegis of the Lancashire Association of Trades Councils (LATC), he found a job description waiting for him that was as long as his resources were short. He was to act as catalyst to stir the trade unions into promoting and organising, to stimulate far-reaching debate on policy, to raise funding, to act as an information resource, to liaise with other bodies. He had no one to help him with all this and no base. For the first year, he shared the premises of Preston Community Press, using a pay-phone that constantly rang for the press. His budget for promotion had been whittled down from the projected £10,000 to £500.

Now none of those things are of themselves fatal. More to the point is Higney's central criticism: that Gwilt was forced to operate as a loner. There was no informed context, no thoughts of development strategy, no attempts to knit Gwilt into the structure and fabric of the Movement.

For all that, there were achievements. Two vastly successful anthologies of writing by trade unionists appeared. The imminent closure of Horwich Railway Works was linked to a photographic exhibition. Preston's annual festival was expanded into a Mayfest. Prescap (Preston's community arts project) got under way. And there was more.

But, as Clare Higney convincingly argues, all 'unconnected projects, an eclectic body of work'. Aims were inconsistent — the arts world and the union world had different viewpoints and never rationalised them — and on top of that came the deepening recession. 'The original enthusiasm,' a key member of LATC told Higney candidly, 'was spent before the Arts Officer arrived.'

What lessons can be learned from all this? Is it that no common ground exists, that the proper job of a union is to protect jobs and rights? Is the rest liberal nonsense? Higney herself bravely accepts, partially, the charge of romanticism. But her faith in the potential of the link holds good and her '. . . Not a Bed of Roses' is full of canny analysis of pitfalls: required reading for any future initiatives.

'What the Hell Do You Want an Artist Here For?' (*Gulbenkian* £3.50 + 50p p&p) charts another kind of relationship between artist and industry: less fraught because its objectives are, on the whole, more precise. The idea of locating an artist in an industrial setting for a limited period was given a foundation by the visionary work of John Latham and the Artists Placement Group in the 1960s. Since then it has burgeoned and, while it has become less subtle in its concept, its profit-and-loss approach is probably easier to grasp. There are artists now in almost all walks of life: in prisons, factories, government offices, football clubs, quarries and cathedrals; sculptors, painters, printmakers. As with Gwilt's area of work, the potential for confusion is massive. Who is meant to benefit? Are artists shackled by the briefs they're given? How do you remedy what one arts administrator called the 'estrangement that seemed to exist between the artist and the wider community'.

Sue Hercombe's lively report takes a pragmatic view. It looks at the relationship from three sides: from the viewpoint of the industrial sponsors of six artists, from that of the artists themselves and from that of the administrators responsible for setting up the marriages. Having talked to these three groups, Hercombe then tries to arrive at some ground rules for fruitful relationships; she comes up with dos and don'ts that in some cases, interestingly, echo Higney's suggestions. A support group drawn from the work force is one of her major recommendations, as are preparing the ground and clarity of purpose.

Demystification of the artist is one instantly obvious and most cited benefit. A new look at despised surroundings by the inhabitants was another. Artists in return gained a valuable sense of context and learned from new relationships. Administrators found their own kind of satisfaction. 'A great majority of people,' said Lucy Milton of Newcastle's Artists' Agency, 'have a sense of the aesthetic in their lives . . . I was looking for a way to develop that and to end the isolation of the artist.'

What Gwilt provided was the other side of that formula: outlets for a general creativity. The placement scheme leaves much of that untouched. □

TELEVISION

Home sweet home

Hugo Williams

THE INSPIRATION for the compulsively watchable, 16-hour-long saga **Heimat** (BBC2) was a story told by the author's mother about a man from her village who went out for a beer one day and never came back: 'He chucked up everything and just cleared off', as Larkin put it. 'I wanted to understand the man's motives', says Edgar Reitz, 'and he became a symbol for all those who leave home.'

The film opens with Paul's return from WW1, which will eventually emerge as the origin of his defection. The vision of home-life that greets this weary-eyed, war-damaged soldier is described in icy black and white images with colour occasionally breaking through, like blood returning to frozen hands. A first celebratory pee in the village midden, smiled on by his blacksmith father, cuts to a colour shot of a twisted fly-paper, revolving like a stream of urine. As in a dream, Paul frees a trapped fly and we are back with his monochrome family and their talk of a new sport's field. Will he achieve his own freedom? Or did he leave an invisible limb behind in the trenches that he will have to go and look for? With anything but Germanic insistence, natural metaphors of incident and plot flesh out a story that, with 32 main parts, 159 secondary characters and 3,687 extras might easily have turned into mere sociology. Colour is accent, an open window, emotionality. The sudden changeovers are often irrational, a visual blink, refocusing the mind.

It is suspected that the beautiful gypsy girl Appolonia has had a baby by a Frenchman during the war and the midden, a useful metaphor for murky guilt and the past, is searched for the child's corpse. They find only the vanished motorcycle of the pretentious village mayor, who has to be first with all the latest gadgets, notably a radio which he commissions Paul to construct for him. The radio, like the gypsy girl, becomes a symbol of escape for Paul, but he loses Appolonia to her Frenchman and marries the pretty Aryan girl he will eventually abandon for the open road and America. As if in mourning, comes the unveiling of the war memorial, which is more like the releasing of a ghost as the elaborate cover is yanked shuddering into a tree and rain pours on a choir singing 'The heavens praise the eternal glory' of something or other.

The film has that cohesive repertory acting of Thirties French films like *Pepe le Moco*, with the added ingredient of German romanticism, suggested by the film's title: a word discredited by Nazi misuse, meaning nostalgia as well as home, which has recently been rehabilitated by young Germans; worryingly, no doubt.

The German film of our **Royalty** (C4), though award-winning, was a poor affair, at

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

once po-faced and respectful, with only one shot — of the Duke of Edinburgh boredly polishing his place-mat at a banquet — to divert the brain from numb homage.

The BBC's **Happy Birthday Dear Ma'am . . .** (BBC1) was far happier, with a genuinely warm birthday feel to it, as if we had finally stopped being polite and accepted the old girl as a friend. 'Common faults on such occasions are tongue-tiedness and over-formality', said an aide briefing some sailors due to meet her. They obliged by going bonkers over a game of 'Uckers' (Ludo) which presenter L. Kennedy said he had been nicknamed throughout his term in the Navy.

People's 'queen dreams' (common) obviously say more about *them* than the queen. But actual queen encounters also reveal much about their tellers. Harold Wilson's preferred memory of Her Majesty was in a hunting lodge near Balmoral, where the queen made him and Mary a cup of tea, then washed up afterwards while Harold smoked his pipe. A royal portraitist claimed that the queen took a keen interest in the occasional traffic accident outside her house during sittings and said she used to like to see the horse-cab bringing her despatches in the morning. 'Do you have many horses ma'am?' he asked, his mind on his work. There was a pause from his sitter. 'Yes, I do have quite a few horses actually. Some people might say I have far too many.'

Just how many may be judged from the fact that the queen has had 350 winners in her life and has 'a wonderful memory for a horse's face' — a gift gained in the public sector, where we saw her wide-eyed at President Reagan's remark that a storm in San Francisco was 'the worst in the North Atlantic in living memory'.

Can his shaky geography be responsible for his recent paranoia? 'People in the United States have never experienced war', said an opposition senator in an effective but depressing assessment of the Libyan situation on **Panorama** (BBC1). 'When the first act of terrorism comes there is going to be chaos.' Asked if the raid hadn't been an assassination attempt, General Vernon Walters, their undiplomatic ambassador to the UN, replied astonishingly, 'Nonsense, the United States doesn't kill people.' The programme established beyond doubt that Libya is not a major force in international terrorism, only easier to bomb than Syria and Iran, a fact confirmed by Walters. 'What would Harry Truman have done?' an average citizen of the deliberately-chosen town of Independence was irrelevantly asked. 'Libya wouldn't be there', replied the average citizen.

I wonder, would South Africa? 'We have survived as pure whites for many years,' said the statutory Boer housewife on **Witness to Apartheid** (C4), 'and we have the right to survive and I don't see why we should disappear, because that is what will happen, we will become chocolate coloured. I myself feel we should have a wipe-out like we had in Sharpeville.' Her solution may seem like a peaceful compromise compared to what will happen when the generation of children currently being shot and sjamboked grows up. 'I am prepared to sacrifice my life,' said a black teenager, his eyes bright with the future. □

Gland aid

Bill Greenwell

WHEN I WAS 12, impressionable, pubescent, my mother passed me and, in that casual manner mothers sometimes have, she said *aaaaargh!*

Or, more precisely, *aaaaargh, what is That!?*

In the films, recipients of this kind of comment flick their heads carefully around at an invisible space, ascribing the identity of the addressee to some unhelpfully thin air. Life mirrors Art. So did I.

Aaaaargh, she said, *what is That on your neck?*

I glanced down. Try it: it is not the question most susceptible of a simple, immediate answer. I had to check out the offensive blemish in a mirror. There was a knob, a knob in the middle of my neck. I'd not spotted it before. It was time, my mother confirmed, to See Your Auntie Hazel She Is A Doctor (exactly similar advice as I was offered when I'd asked a real teaser, to wit, why was So-And-So so like So-And-So's father, if the mother gave birth?).

'Auntie Hazel, what is this er, er, knob in my neck? I am not worried; it is my mother.'

'It is your Adam's Apple.'

I felt a lump in my throat: the first of many such let-offs in my life. For one of the side-effects of television, public information and the rapid, inflammatory spread of health education is that we are nearly all abnormally paranoid (the others have their work cut out keeping the equation balanced). I have had a suspected case of most major illnesses for much of my waking life: cancer, tumour, the falling sickness, death (imminent). My heart bleeds for the general practitioners, sitting in such cheery judgment on mutts like myself who plague them with imaginary palsies when they have much better things to cure.

And they write it all down, too, don't they? O for a glimpse of my card. 'Asked what the protuberance in his chest was; told him it was breastbone.' That was a relief, I can tell you. For several days I'd been limping woefully about, smothering myself to sleep with the pillow, in terror of The Discovery.

And in terror of The Road to Discovery. As any clot, blood or otherwise, knows, you can't just barge into the health centre with a suspect something-or-other. You have to wait until you're convincingly ill and attempt an *en passant* ('Oh, and while I'm here . . .')

Mumps.

Funny word, isn't it, mumps? *Mumps*. Quite jolly, suggestive of games, of pastry kneaded playfully, of benign little elves engaging themselves in some eager farandole or fandango. Mumpy-mumpy-mumpy. Rather a likeable fellow, the mump. Have a mump. Give us the mump. That mump over there looks delicious.

My son's just had mumps, and I've never had them, although I know all about them, *viz.* they cause sterility, hair loss, amnesia, falling sickness, trenchfoot, rigor mortis. Especially sterility. But I thought of my Adam's Apple, the first fruit as it were of my original silliness, and pushed my son cheerily to the GP. How absurd of me, I thought.

He chucked Tom under his ballooning cheeks. Yes, he had mumps: good: tell him to spread it round his friends.

I haven't had it, I admitted. It, them.

He eyed me sternly. Look, he said, minimal risk, no need to panic (*panic*), very few indeed, sterility, testicles, pancreas, vomiting and lots of it, never normally any problem (*problem*), but if symptoms . . .

The crippling pain in my balls built steadily up over about eight days. Could it be the new jeans? Some crafty denim-stitcher saving a fatal centimetre round the crutch?

No problem with the pancreas (no idea where it is).

Vomiting, aha. But not lots of it.

At work, after I'd snaffled a cancellation at the early evening surgery, I made light of my affliction to colleagues. Grim faces. Hope for your sake . . . Knew someone once who . . .

Then the jokers. Carry them about in a wheelbarrow! More efficient than vasectomy! Knew someone once who . . .

Where was My Auntie Hazel She Is A Doctor when I needed her? They ushered me into the doctor's room, where I decided to come thoroughly clean. Man to man, although I'd abandoned the 'it's mah balls, doc' routine. Wayne and Mitchum, maybe: I went for the more affably clinical.

My doctor's friendly but serious. You did say, I said, if I felt any pain, testicles, aching, bad even now. He looked deliberately unalarmed. Into the Inspection Chamber.

'Well, it's not mumps,' he announced determinedly, tweaking at some other namelessly private particle. 'Could be something called orchitis,' tweak, 'no — you'd have hit the ceiling if you'd got that, and I'd done this.' I stared at the ceiling.

He thanked me for coming. *Thanked* me. I went home feeling like something out of a Larkin poem.

The next day, jocular, I met the grey and anxious faces at work (the ones who hadn't had mumps, and had heard), my testicular horripilation now entirely subsided. Less than 24 hours before, some had muffled their throats, refused to follow me on to the 'phone or laughed me silly. Now came the frantic confessions. For they too had been nursing their nerves, tics, irruptions, bumps that went thud in the night, scary monstrosities. Laughter: The Best Medicine, isn't that what the *Reader's Digest* pronounces it? We sat around howling at each other's inanities.

And then crept off quietly, each to a private nightmare. □

Weekend competition

No 2921 **Set by Maud Gracechurch**

Blurbs for famous novels as if written by a leading character therein. Max. 120 words. By 8 May.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No 2918 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Sonnets on 'First Looking Through Last Year's Summer Wardrobe'.

Report **By Mercy Dash**

Kindred spirits and jumble-sale dressers, you were without exception inspired to eloquence by the breathtaking tackiness of your wardrobes, so let me not to the publication of your gems admit impediment. Congrats to all and ten pounds for those first out of the kiss-me-kwik hat.

Much have I stumbled in these plimsolls old
Through bog and dung with mutterings obscene;
This rotting anorak of mouldy green
Full oft has failed to keep out summer's cold.
Oft of the Grecian Islands I've been told
By jaunty colleagues, tanned and fit and keen —
I feel the bloody opposite of serene
When those smug farts their jolly tales unfold.

Here are my leaky boots, my woolly hat —
I hear the disloyal voices once again;
'For God's sake, father, you're not wearing that!'
As off I lead them up some sodding ben —
I see the face of each ungrateful brat,
Sullen and stranded in some sodden glen.

TOM DONNELLY

Old Albert Pringle, almost eighty-one,
Won a Dream Holiday in Sunny Spain.
'Some sixty years too late,' he thought with pain,
'To lure the senoritas, yet I'll shun
A repetition of last summer's rain;
No-one's too old to get a little fun,
Or, at the least, to toast beneath the sun',
Then checked last summer's garments through again.
Alas! One stiffened mac to brave the gales,
Some sere and yellow Long Johns, camel-kneed,
Ten cankered woollies, creamed from jumble sales,
A swimsuit of a 1930s breed.
He *might* have sunbathed . . . No, like all such cases
The moths had picked on the indecent places.

O. BANFIELD

What pants, what bras are these? What garish socks?
What one-piece bathing suit, cut lewdly high?
What weird cross-gartered sandals? What tie-dye
Bath-robe? What eye-distressing op-art frocks?
This trunkload of old tat severely mocks
My sometime vaunted taste; and yet 'tis I
Who, wearing it (the camera does not lie),
Smirks from a *niche* among the Breton rocks.

Ye Gods! What shall I do? I can't afford
Another outfit *and* a holiday;
And since I do not wish to wear this gear
Ever again, in England *or* abroad,
I've just one single chance to get away:
I'll book in at a Nudist Camp this year.

GERARD BENSON

I thought I heard a Cuckoo, above the neighbours bass.
And, tearing down the double-glazing, reckless in my haste,
I gazed out at the window box, a barren, windswept place,
Just to catch two pigeons in a passionate embrace.
No matter, summer must be here, there's something in the air.
I'd heard the locals talk of it, a strange and warming glare.
So clothes both bright and breezy were the order of the day
And, swinging open wardrobe doors, I viewed the disarray.
I wasn't quite prepared for the assault upon my eyes,
as multi-coloured tanktops fought it out with kipper ties.
There were several tatty cheeseclothes going mouldy at the back
and a pair of platform shoes, complete with self-assembly pack.
Then I suddenly remembered why I was in the same old fix.
Of course, we haven't had a summer since nineteen seventy-six.

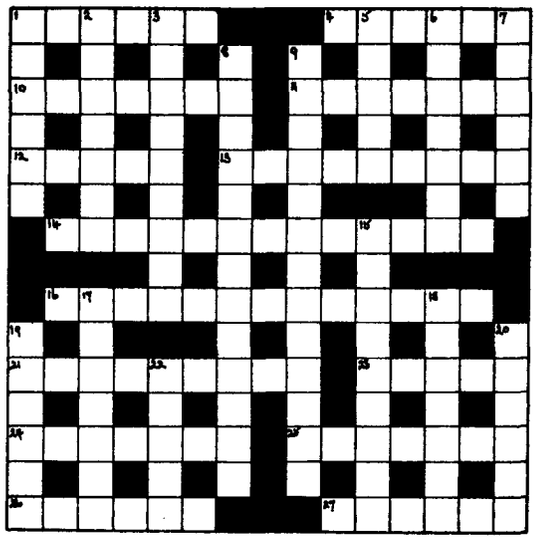
FRANK ROOTS

I lift the laden hangers from the rack
And lay them in a pile upon the bed.
Would Oxfam want this frayed and wrinkled stack
Of cheapo tat? Would Belker be seen dead . . .?
This T-shirt has SEX DRUGS & ROCK 'N' ROLL
In billboard lettering across the front;
I bought it, drunk, in some low glory-hole
In mid-Manhattan. What a cunning stunt.
The lightweight jeans won't fit. They never do
After nine months of alcohol abuse.
And my alpaca jacket — nearly new —
Seems to be vomit-marbled. What's the use?
Just looking at this garbage makes me sore;
I may as well truck out and buy some more.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

Weekend Crossword 1516

PRIZE: £10 Book Token for the first correct solution opened. Entries to Crossword 1516, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU by first post 13 May.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

_____

ACROSS

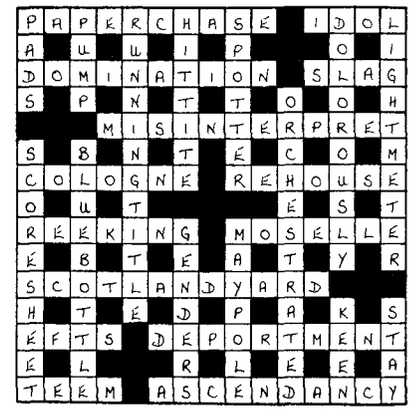
1. Ordered a horse for the cad? (3,3)
4. As a cake may be, with insects inside (6)
10. Liberal reform provides aid for handicapped (7)
11. A place for the game although he is not in the team (7)
12. Reserved as an England manager about a goalless draw (5)
13. Woman schemes to hold a relative for officials (9)
14. No true rockets may be used as a means of hitting back (13)
16. It is depressing when the ears get messy in eating (13)
21. Music caught one in island company (9)
23. Butterfly god (5)
24. It is poisonous so a notice must be concocted (7)
25. Approaches welcome to French girls without clothes on (7)
26. Rates at which the southern seas recede (6)
27. Possibly get sad since if it is this it might be a tragedy (6)

DOWN

1. The animal has to move up and down before punishment (6)
2. The spinner has to try to get the operator about the smell (7)
3. Bird given for one who gets an honour after badly folding (9)
5. Means of catching an animal in the middle of a plot (5)
6. Vessel which is just torture after land transport (7)
7. Fashionable part of address young people admire (6)
8. Want the French marriage partners for key confrontations (6,7)
9. Like to? (13)
15. Makes entrances with fresh vitality (9)
17. Appeal for devilish wisdom (7)
18. Sword missing from the gallery (7)
19. Fights for pieces (6)
20. Valued, we hear, although subjected to force (6)
22. I competed like Bacchus (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1514



Prizewinner to 1514

F. Appleby
(Sherborne, Dorset)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CLASSIFIED ADS: 01-251 5487

New Statesman
14-16 Farringdon Lane
London EC1R 3AU

RATES: *£8.50 per cm* + VAT
Charities £7.50 per cm + VAT

LINAGE: *35p* per word + VAT, *min 12 words*

HEARTSEARCH PURSUITS *£5.75* for *25* words incl. box number & VAT. Extra words *30p* each (incl VAT). Send ads to: **Classified Dept, New Statesman, FREEPOST, London EC1B 1EB**

DEADLINE: Normally *11am Tues. for Fri.*

BOOKINGS, ENQUIRIES, 'DICTATE-AN-AD'
Call *David Jones 01-251 5487*

APPOINTMENTS VACANT

CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS!

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL BRITISH SECTION
is seeking a

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

An energetic and resourceful person to work under the general direction of the Head of Campaigns. The Campaign Coordinator is responsible for the planning, organising, implementation and evaluation of campaigns and group level actions, including the production of campaign material and information.

Initiative and a capacity for hard work under pressure are essential, as is experience in campaigning. Commitment to the aims of Amnesty International is imperative for this challenging position.

This is a full-time post with a starting salary of **£9,250** rising by annual increment to **£12,500**

Ask for full job description and application form (please send s.a.e.) from:

Amnesty International British Section
5 Roberts Place
LONDON, EC1R OEJ

Closing date for returned applications forms: **14 May 1986**

NATIONAL ORGANISER

The Society of Telecom Executives, a TUC affiliated union, is an effective progressive Trade Union which protects the interests of 28,000 Management and Professional staff employed by British Telecom, has decided to create a new post of National Organiser. The officer appointed will be responsible for membership recruitment and retention in the STE represented grades in British Telecom. In addition to reviewing the union's current recruitment policies and performance, the successful candidate will be required to devise recruitment strategies appropriate to British Telecom's new organisation.

The ideal candidate will have experience of work in the trade union movement at different levels and a reasonable standard of academic achievement. A record of previous successful recruitment to a Trade Union in the private sector environment would be useful.

The salary scale for the post will be **£13,560** to **£17,841** plus **£733** outer London Weighting.

The post is covered by a contributory pension and has an entitlement to six weeks' annual leave.

For further details including a job description, write in confidence to the General Secretary. The last date for written applications is **Friday 16 May 1986**.

The STE *is an equal opportunities employer.*

STE

Society of Telecom Executives
102/104 Sheen Road
Richmond
Surrey TW9 1UF
Tel: 01-948 5423

Hackney Stands Up to Racism

RACE RELATIONS ADVISER

PO4 £16,065 - £17,148 p.a.

Hackney Council have launched a radical Borough Race Relations Programme to combat racism and to ensure racial equality. Our strategy is anchored on the Council's own practices – including employment, service delivery, grants and support to community groups and organisations, as well as its other operations.

The programme is outward-looking and also covers the voluntary and private sectors as well as the statutory agencies operating in the Borough.

To implement and develop this programme further, the Council has created a Race Relations Unit in the Chief Executive's Office. We are looking for Race Relations Advisers to work mainly at a Directorate level, under the guidance and supervision of the Principal Relations Adviser.

You will be responsible for ensuring racial equality in a major Directorate, work closely with committee members and the director covering all aspects of the service; initiate, develop and implement adequate training for racial equality; and attend committees etc., to report and advise.

As a senior member of the Race Relations Unit, you will contribute to both the Council-wide and Borough-wide issues on a team-work basis.

The Council is looking for a person of the calibre to meet this demanding challenge. You will have to demonstrate sound and thorough knowledge of race relations work; show ability, skills and commitment to racial equality.

A proven track record of working in Black and Ethnic minority organisations, race relations and/or local government would be desirable.

Job share applications will be welcomed with or without a partner.

Please quote Ref CERK712/NS.

Application forms are available from John Penney, Head of Personnel Services, Town Hall, Mare Street, E8 1EA or telephone 01-986 5331 (24 hour answering service) quoting reference.

Closing date: 9 May 1986.

The Council intends to decentralise its services, therefore the duties, hours or work or location of this (these) posts may be subject to change.

HACKNEY COUNCIL
Working for local people

We positively welcome applications from black people, disabled people and women where they are under-represented in particular jobs.

Please mention **NEW STATESMAN** When replying to advertisements

OV SELECTION have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers. Phone Odette Veazey. OV Selection (Emp. Agy), Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345. N49.34

PRACTICE MANAGER WANTED. Three Doctor practice in Crookes, Sheffield 10. Administrative and health service experience essential. Whitley Council rate. Further particulars from Dr Simon Barley, 203 School Road, Sheffield S10 1GN. Applications by 10 May. N17.10

CANDIDATE

BEXLEYHEATH CLP are seeking a PPC. Applications to Secretary: Richard Goss, 67 Pickford Lane, Bexleyheath, Kent DA7 4RN, or tel: 01-303 1916. N17.9

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

VACATION WORK

STUDENT WANTED this summer for interesting, varied work in a lively office in London. Mid-June to September, remuneration negotiable. A good telephone manner is essential. Please write to Box 0101. N16.9

BOOKS/ PUBLICATIONS

GURDJIEFF, OUSPENSKY, NICOLL 'A Point in the Work' £6.80 inc. p.&p. payable to: "Work Books". Write: Work Books, c/o William Sessions Ltd, 144 Liverpool Road, London N1 1LA. N17.1

REVIEW COPIES and other books in fine condition bought and sold by Vermillion Books, 57 Red Lion St, London WC1. Tel: 01-242 5822. N49.24

AUTHORS WANTED BY N.Y. PUBLISHER

Leading subsidy book publisher seeks manuscripts of all types: fiction, non-fiction, poetry, juvenile, scholarly and religious works, etc. New authors welcomed. Send for free, illustrated 40-page brochure N-89.
Vantage Press, 516 West 34th Street, New York, NY 10001.

ACCOM. VACANT

CAMDEN SQUARE, NW1: flat to let, 19 July – 30 August. 1 double bed. Telephone 01-482 1037, eves. N17.4

N6 VERY LARGE, quiet, ground floor room, cooker, fridge, sink. £180 p.c.m. 01-340 6560 after 5 p.m. N17.5

PUTNEY. Sunny top flat with south facing balcony, for couple. 7-8 weeks from 28 April. £100 p.w. inclusive. 01-789 6030. N16.5

ACC. WANTED

AMERICAN PROFESSOR and wife need to rent a one or two bedroom apartment, or flat, from approximately 28 May through 15 August. No pets, please. Box (15)2747. N15.6

SINGLE PARENT and daughter urgently require good accommodation, in or near Chester. Box (17)2879. N17.6

WANTED: Unfurnished flat/loft/studio (but large enough) to rent for indefinite period. D. Weeks (American but English resident; writer/researcher/some-time artist), 14 Broadway, London SW1. N17.7

WOMAN, 29, interests: conservation, Third World politics, alternative medicine etc., seeks room in shared house Dulwich area/S.E. London. Ring 01-470 0545 Friday and Tuesday evenings 4.30–8.30. N17.8

FINANCIAL

BRIDGING LOANS before contracts are exchanged. From £15,000. Apply for brochure & terms from Principal Lenders (not brokers). United Provident, 31 Dover St, London W1A 4RT. Tel. 01-499 5416. N02.3

SALARIED PERSONS Postal Loans Ltd. Loans from £50, 175 Regent Street, London W1. For written quote apply: Tel: 01-734 1974. N49.39

HEARTSEARCH

AFFECTIONATE, LONDON area male friend sought for weekends and holidays, by outgoing, tall, slim, attractive, single woman economist (35), currently in Shakespeare country exile. Box (17)2857. N17.13

A SEMI-DETACHED smokefree, welcome awaits lonely London lady or warm wan woman, from middle-aged, middlebrow, middle income male (48), for social leisures and human pleasures. Box (17)2881. N17.14

HEARTSEARCH

ARE YOU a lively minded individual, 18-80, enjoying the arts, discussions, conferences, rambles, dancing? The Progressive League caters for Mind, Body and Intellectual Stimulus. And it's so cheap. Ring 01-586 2274. N49.19

ATTRACTIVE MANCHESTER male, 29, socialist, anti-sexist, seeks woman to share relaxation, social times and more. Photo (returned) and letter please. Box (16)2809. N16.12

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating. Dept. (7NS), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel. 01-938 1011. N49.20

HANDSOME MALE graduate, 32, recently moved to London would like to meet attractive female for uncomplicated, unpossessive, imaginative sensual fun and sincere friendship. I enjoy theatre, travel and good food. Photo and phone number appreciated. Box (17)2878. N17.15

HUMOROUS, SENSITIVE, sociable male academic, 41, seeks lively, attractive woman (30-45), to share life and interests in books, music, travel, food and wine. London/Midlands. Box (17)2850. N17.16

INTELLIGENT, LADYLIKE, practical female, 50s, attractive, slim, caring, no ties, not leftist, North Thames area, seeks cultured, successful, unattached male, for genuine, caring relationship. Box (17)2866. N17.17

LEFTISH LAWYER, 30, kind, perceptive, attractive, cultured, solvent and going to waste, seeks female soulmate. Apply now. London. Box (17)2856. N17.18

LONDON CABBIE, Jewish, 36, seeks sympathetic, warm woman for solid relationship. Both mind and body are still fairly fit. Box (17) 2845. N17.19

LONELY EGYPTIAN male, early 40s, seeks understanding female for caring, sharing relationship. I'm Christian, UK resident, educated, well-bred, considerate, varied interests. No affairs please. Reply to: NH, P.O. Box 32, London SW9 6JY. N15.27

MALE, PROFESSIONAL, 53, early retired, seeks with partner's approval woman with whom to share Marvell, Mozart, Moors and maybe more. Box (17)2876. N17.20

MALE, YOUNGISH 57, non-smoker, with wide artistic and social interests, good food, gardening, walking, seeks warm, open-minded partner (40s). NE Fife. Box (17)2847. N17.21

MANY LADIES, graduates, in Philippines wish introductions view marriage men all ages. Ladies looking for educated, professional men. Stamp details CSN, P.O. Box 552, London, SE14 5JE. N17.22

OLD FRIENDS: an introduction agency for the over forties. Loneliness is not inevitable. Details from: Anne Brent, 18a Highbury New Park, London N5 2DB. N15.31

Reminder!!! Box Replies

When answering more than one advertisement ONLY stamp the postal envelope NOT the individual replies — send them please to:
Box . . . . . .
New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AU.

PRESENTABLE, MATURE bubbly 50s woman, intelligent, in business, sense of humour, would like to meet similar man. Photo appreciated and returned. London. Box (17)2882. N17.23

PROFESSIONAL MAN, late 40s, living near M1, invalid partner, reasonably intelligent, presentable, interesting, sense of humour, no (noticeable) oddities, unfanatical, hopes to find woman friend with roughly similar attributes. Box (17)2877. N17.24

SELECT FRIENDS the Introduction Agency that interviews the people you will meet. Further information: Select Friends, 58 Maddox St, London W1. 01-493 9937. N1.1

SOPHISTICATED LADIES/Gentlemen introduced in India/Worldwide for new friendships, matrimony/hobbies – exchange. Details free. Penpals Circle, Gandhi Market, Chaura Bazar (NS), Ludhiana-141008, India. N16.33

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR (sans turban!) seeks Jean-Paul Sartre (over 50). London. Box (17)2864. N17.25

SINGLE, PROFESSIONAL woman, 42, independent, intelligent, warm, affectionate, sense of humour, varied interests including sport, gardening, music, food, travel, seeks kind, caring man. North Somerset. Box (17)2875. N17.26

LIVELY CAMBRIDGE bachelor, 40, loves theatre, music, ethnic cultures, warm, healthy sexuality. Seeks an intelligent, aware, sensual woman for loving friendship and whatever follows naturally. Box (16)2836. N16.23

TALL, INTELLIGENT man, late 30s, making a new life in London after many years in America, would like to meet a warm, attractive woman, who like me is ready to try again. Box (15)2766. N15.38

THE MARRIAGE BUREAU (Heather Jenner), 124 New Bond St, W1. 01-629 9634. Individual attention. N50.2

WEST LONDON professional woman, divorced, 42, wants to meet unattached, intelligent, solvent male, who normally wouldn't dream of answering this ad. Literary, physical, non-smoker. Box (17)2846. N17.27

WEST OF SCOTLAND widow, tall, slim, 41, 2 children, in need of male company. Please write with info. Tory supporters and married men need not reply. Box (17)2852. N17.28

WOMAN, 45, independent, single parent, likes literature, films, theatre and talking (sometimes listens), seeks intelligent, humorous man to enliven social life. Brighton. Box (17)2849. N17.29

WOMAN: 48, happy, optimistic; from – out politics, psychology, parenting, poetry; in – to talking, listening, reading, writing, radical and egalitarianism: seeks man sufficiently similar and different for ordinary ecstacy. Box (17)2865. N17.30

WOMAN, mid thirties, attractive, living in London, seeks considerate man, with sense of humour, who understands her need to maintain links with her rural roots. Has the usual cultural, political interests. Box (17)2863. N17.31

YOUNG INDIAN graduate, 23, with interests in music, photography, travel, dance seeks young woman with a view to marriage in Europe. Box (17)2886. N17.32

YOUR CHOICE – the Introduction Agency with a difference! Your chance to meet new friends/partners through detailed profiles on paper and video. Contact: Jeannie 01-670 9840 or Box (47)1940. N49.23

YOUTHFUL (41), warm, humorous man, into politics, peace, music, countryside, travel and fun, seeks attractive, like-minded woman for whatever. Photo please. Box (17)2851. N17.33

FRIENDS
ALL OVER THE WORLD
would like to correspond with you. Friendship, language, travels, marriage, etc.
Request free brochure:
LES AMIS DU COURRIER
International Pen-Friend Club
Rue Bovière 18, 4050 ESNEUX
BELGIUM

TUITION

GREEK LESSONS for travel, business or pleasure. £6 per hour, 2 hour sessions. Tel: Gabriella 01-249 0109. N16.7

THERAPY

JUNGIAN ANALYSIS and therapy. Marital and sexual counselling. N. London area. 01-452 4722. N03.7

GENERAL SERVICES

AUDIO/COPY typing, word processing. Neat efficient, competitive. Jenny Burke: 01-892 8929. N17.2

QUALITY PERSONAL astrology. Your birthchart explained. Madison Astrological Service, 17 London Road, Old Stratford, Milton Keynes, MK19 6AE N17.3

QUALITY TYPING English, German, French. Moderate charges. Anne Shotts: 01-452 6617. N49.27

THE TYPING POOL a woman's co-operative. Professional low cost typing of articles, thesis, letters etc, from script or tape. Translation and typing of French, German, Spanish and Italian. Central London. Tel: 01-837 1489. N49.28

MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Informal short talk & questions. 'The Cycle of Reincarnation' 8 p.m. 27 April. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2. N17.11

HEART SEARCH 01-251 5487

Heartsearch & Pursuits

£5.75

for 25 words including Box no & VAT
(extra words at 35p)

You can dictate-an-ad up to 11 a.m. Tuesdays, or complete the coupon below

AD TEXT (BLOCK CAPS) or use separate sheet of paper

Name:_____

Address:_____

No. of weeks:_____ Remittance £_____

Or charge my Access/Visa/American/Express

Card number:_____

AD for PURSUITS ☐/HEARTSEARCH ☐ **(please tick)**

Post Coupon to: **Classified Dept., New Statesman, FREEPOST, London EC1B 1EB**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HISTORY WORKSHOP CENTRE

AUTOBIOGRAPHY PAST AND PRESENT

31 May & 1 June, St Cross Building, Oxford

Political, spiritual and working class autobiography; black autobiography; women's autobiography; writing autobiography; growing up in the fifties; psychoanalytic approaches; personality as fiction.

Programme and tickets from
History Workshop Centre, Ruskin College,
Oxford OX1 2HE.
Waged £8 Unwaged £4 Pensioners £2. Centre members reduction of £1.

HOLIDAYS/ TRAVEL

NORWAY £175
24 May-1 June
Superb fjord scenery. First class hotels.

VENICE & THE DOLOMITES £135
23 May-1 June

YUGOSLAV RIVIERA (Zadar) £160
24 May-5 June
First class hotel. Holiday price includes free excursions to Rijeka, Trogir, Split and Dubrovnik.

BUDAPEST & LAKE BALATON £145
24 May-1 June

IRKUTSA & LAKE BAIKAL £325
22 July-8 August By sleeper train

MOSCOW £199 Travel by sleeper train
11 day holidays by train, starting every **Tuesday** from **24 June** to **16 September**. Hotel provides full board and programme. Free entry to the Kremlin, all museums and the Exhibition of Scientific Achievement.

PRAGUE £170
26 July-3 August, 16-24 August

MOSCOW & VOLGOGRAD £260
16-28 September

BUDAPEST CITY £165
Dates as Moscow. Excursions to Heroes Square, Castle, Liberation Memorial, Roman City, Margaret Island, Zoo, Agricultural Museum and Opera.

Holidays also to Leningrad, Prague, Venice, Verona, E. Germany, Sochi, Tashkent, Volgograd and Algeria. Please state country required.

YORKSHIRE TOURS
49 Thornton Lodge Road,
Huddersfield HD1 3JQ
Tel: 0484 24269

HOLIDAYS BY COACH
(London Pick-Up)

YUGOSLAVIA — Kranjska Gora £160

Half Board: Price also includes all excursions to: **Lake Bled/Bohinj,** and **Postojna Caves, Lubliana** etc. **24 May/2 Jun.**

ITALY — Lake Garda . . . £175

Opera Lovers — chance to see the famous **Verona Opera** and excursions to **Venice, Lakeside Resorts** etc. **8-17 July** HB (tickets for opera extra)

Holidays also to: **Vigezzo Valley; Lake Maggiore; Bay of Naples** with an overnight stop; **Brussels; Selce (Yugo)** etc.

FAIRMONT TOURS, 67 High Street, Heckmondwike, West Yorks WF16 0AD Tel. 0924 401739.

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON. Cottage overlooking mouth of river Otter & sea (2 mins). Sleeps 4, gas, elec, TV. Ring 01-435 0171. N15.14

JOURNEY LATIN AMERICA. Low cost flights, holiday journeys, 3-6 weeks. JLA, 16 Devonshire Road, London W4 2HD. 01-747 3108. N49.30

TRIED THE REST, now try the best. For low air fares to world-wide destinations inc. Africa. SHL, 313A Hoe St, London E17. 01-520 7911. N50.16

THEATRE WEEKEND

THEATRE WEEKEND IN BRISTOL. 'A Little Hotel On The Side,' Feydeau (Production for Bath International Festival) by Bristol Old Vic, and Strindberg's 'Miss Julie.' Best seats, luxury hotel, talks. £133 inclusive. 6 June. Numbers limited. West Country Weekends, 1 Bellevue, Clifton, Bristol BS8. 0272 798609. N17.12

AGENDA

FOR DETAILS CALL DAVID JONES 01-251 5487

SAT 26 APR

CRISIS IN MASCULINITY. CONFERENCE ON GENDER RELATIONS. 10.00am–6.00pm. At Corams Fields, 93 Guildford Street, London WC1. £5 (£2.50 concessions). Speakers, discussions, film.

MON 28 APR

BENEATH THE WHITE COAT: seminars on science and politics organised by the **British Society for Social Responsibility in Science.** This week *Alan Dalton*, Labour Research Department: OUTLAWING HAZARDS AT WORK BY THE YEAR 2000. 8.00pm Adam's Arms, Conway Street, London W1 (tube: Warren Street).

ENFIELD & HARINGEY. Women & Freedom: Marilyn French's "Beyond Power" 8pm. Muswell Hill Library, N10. Enfield & Haringey Branch, The Socialist Party of Great Britain. Admission free.

RADICAL MANCHESTER? Can the City regain its reputation for radical journalism with the projected arrival of NEWS ON SUNDAY? Speakers from: World in Action, Brass Tacks, News on Sunday and The Guardian. Cornerhouse, Oxford Street, Manchester. 7.30pm £2.25 unwaged £1.50.

COURSES

COME AND LEARN ABOUT ACTING. 2-day, 3-day and 5-day Courses. May to August. Theatre in Kensington. Tel: 01-946 2161.

WED 30 APR

SEX, VIOLENCE AND DOMESTIC HARMONY IN A NON-SEXIST SOCIETY: Amerindians in Amazonia. Speaker: Cecilia McAllum. Organised by London Anthropology Society. Quinton Kyanston School, Marlborough Hill, NW8. 7.00pm.

VALUES IN BRITISH POLITICS. What They Are and What They Should Be. A major lecture series, Wednesdays at 1.05pm. St James's Church Piccadilly. This week: The Rt Revd Jim Thompson, Bishop of Stepney.

SAT 3 MAY

CONCERT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND JUSTICE at the Swiss Cottage Centre, 19 Winchester Road NW3. Music: Yellow Bell and the Eritrean Cultural Band and Soca Disco. Eritrean Food. Bar. Videos: African Peoples Liberation and The Four Horsemen. Exhibitions. 8 till late. Any queries call 01-586 5272.

PHILIPPINES — HOW MUCH HAS CHANGED? Conference and AGM. 10-5, Catholic Chaplaincy, 111 Gower Street, WC1. Tube: Goodge Street. For more information contact: PSG, 152 Grangeway, NW6. Tel: 01-624 7819.

THE OTHER AMERICA
Art and the Labour Movement in the United States
Eds: Phil Foner/R Schultz
Journeyman art **£7.95**
(01) 348 9261

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH INTERNATIONAL

CANADIAN INDIANS
under threat from
THE ARMS RACE

The Innu people face

● The despoilation of their environment and its wildlife. ● The destruction of their culture and lifestyle. ● The denial of their rights to self-determination.

Discover the facts and what you can do to help at

A PUBLIC MEETING

May 1st 1986 **7.30 p.m.**

52 St. Martins Lane, (Friend's House) London WC2
(Leicester Square Tube) ADMISSION FREE

Speakers: Penote Michel, *Innu Spokesman for Canada* Des Wilson, *Campaign Director of Friends of the Earth International* Julian Burger, *Anti-Slavery Society* Marcus Colchester, *Survival International*

Marxism Today

MAY ISSUE

RICHARD KINSEY ON **CRIME**
PAUL HAGERTY: THE AIDS SCARE
INTERVIEW WITH CLARE SHORT
DONALD SASSOON ON **EUROPE'S LEFTS**
ALSO: FRENCH ELECTIONS — *LIBYA* — LABOUR AND MILITANT — *IRELAND'S PROTESTANTS*

■ ■ ON SALE NOW — 85p ■ ■

Or £10.20 (£19 overseas) for 12 mos. subscription to: *MT Subs, 16 St John St, London EC1M 4AY*

Incorporating 'The Nation', 'The Athenaeum' and 'The Week-end Review'. Registered as a newspaper. Typesetting by Tocatta Graphics, Tabard House, 116 Southwark Street, London SE1
Printed by Benham & Co Ltd, Sheepen Place, Colchester CO3 3LH. Published by The Statesman & Nation Publishing Co. Ltd at 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ONCE BITTEN....
I DON'T KNOW; CAMPAIGNING AGAINST ALL PESTICIDES, YET SECRETLY SPREADING POISON ALL OVER YOUR OWN HOUSE, BERYL!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
IT'S ONE OF THOSE TERRIBLE GULFS BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE
CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF DE-FLEAING THE CAT
JANUS GOODMAN

CHESS

WRITING in the aftermath of the raid on Libya I find it difficult to concentrate the mind on anything else. Do you expect normal service? I wondered whether a selection of gross blunders by American players would be appropriate. Of course there is no comparison between oversights of that sort and an action that is not only extremely stupid but also patently immoral. As an expression of contempt for arrogant American self-righteousness it hardly seemed adequate. How is it conceivable that bases on British soil could have been used for such a purpose? How could Thatcher have failed to appreciate that British hostages and other British subjects in the Middle East would be convenient victims of brutal yet predictable reprisals? Then come the 'justifications' of the unjustifiable, adding to the outrage the disgusting deceitfulness of such phrases as 'a war against terrorism' and 'an act of self-defence'. We will indeed degenerate to a yob society if yobbish political leaders can give this newspeak currency.

I exceed my brief and, besides, our minds need some respite from these things. Can I distract you for a while with consideration of a possible revival of the King's Gambit? This old-fashioned opening has a romantic image and a dubious reputation. But there are a few encouraging signals coming from White's side of the board. Spassky used it in the Montpellier Candidates to defeat Seirawan. Mark Hebden always plays it when given the chance and his results do not appear to suffer in consequence. In fact Mark already has a commanding lead in the race for the 1986 Leigh Grand Prix as a result of his performance on the weekend tournament circuit. Anyone wishing to book up on known variations of the gambit could consult Batsford's latest publication, *King's Gambit*, by Viktor Korchnoi and Vladimir Zak (£5.95 in flexi-cover). The sceptics might be right, and the gambit might ultimately be unsound or, more likely, a waste of the privilege of moving first. In the past I have been inclined towards scepticism myself. But a point to note is that in such a relatively neglected area theory is apt to be either tenuous or ropey, leaving quite a lot of scope for significant corrections and fresh ideas.

There is also plenty of scope for fresh ideas, though certainly not due to any lack of attention, in the programming of chess computers. Pergamon's latest offering is Volume No. 4 in their series *Advances in Computer Chess* (edited by D. F. Beal and selling at £16.50 in hardback). This is a collection of papers from a 1984 conference (some technological dissonance in this time-lag!), and as such is really addressed to those already into the subject to some degree. Work on chess-playing programs always leaves me with the uneasy impression of technical brilliance and grand objectives masking a basic frivolity. One of the justifications that the researchers offer for their endeavours is that computer chess is to Artificial Intelligence what *Drosophila melanogaster* (the humble fruitfly) has been to genetics. Frankly, I am more sceptical about this than I am about the soundness of the King's Gambit! Are there really any good reasons to believe that results in this case will be smoothly transferable to other forms of problem-solving? There may be, but the transferability claim needs to be convincingly argued. Otherwise it is not apparent what there is of theoretical import to separate this enterprise from, say, writing software to compose and solve crosswords.

Meanwhile, back with chess as humans play it, Karpov has shown that his defeat by Kasparov has not broken his competitive spirit. He was as impressive as ever in taking first place in a category 13 (i.e., very strong — the GLC International was in the same category) tournament in Brussels with 9/11, ahead of Korchnoi, Miles, Timman, Torre, Romanishin, Seirawan, Ljubojevic, et al. There is also much current activity in chess politics, all directed towards the FIDE presidential elections. Campomanes's right-hand man, the FIDE General Secretary Professor Lim Kok Ann, and Lincoln Lucena's running mate, Ray Keene, have been busy circulating closely reasoned pamphlets on the question of whether Campomanes is a Good Thing for chess. Keene concludes a vigorous argument for the No party thus: 'I do, nevertheless, pledge myself to cooperate without rancour with Professor Lim and Florencio Campomanes on the arrangements for the coming World Championship — Karpov-Kasparov III'. Just what was needed to release the tension for a while — the lovely taste of a storm in a tea-cup.

George Botterill

New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU
Tel: 01-253 2001/Editorial: 01-253 2003
Telex: 28449/Cables: Newstat, London EC1
© 1986 Statesman & Nation Publishing Co Ltd & contributors
Published and distributed by The Statesman & Nation Publishing Co Ltd

Editor: Hugh Stephenson; **Deputy Editor:** Sarah Benton; **News Editor:** Andrew Lumsden; **Editorial staff:** Duncan Campbell, Jane Dibblin, Rob Edwards (Scotland), Patrick Forbes, Peter Kellner (Political editor), John Rentoul, Claudia Wright (Washington); **Literary Editor:** Gillian Wilce; **Arts Editor:** Harriett Gilbert; **Poetry Editor:** Hugo Williams; **Production Manager:** Joanne Hurst; **Layout & design:** Vicky Hutchings; **Editorial Assistant:** Jane Thomas

Subscriptions: Cecilia Milton, Joan Scanlon; **Circulation:** Liz Cooper, John Duncan, Karin Jensen; **Display advertisements:** Laura Berryman, Michael Roberts (01-253 2001); **Classified advertisements:** David Jones (01-251 5487)

Subscription rates: UK & Eire £37; Europe (air mail only £41; rest of world: air speeded £41; air mail £52. USA: air speeded $62; air mail $83. Canada: air speeded Can $72; air mail Can $97.

Second class postage paid at New York, NY USPS 382260. Air freight in US by Speedimpex USA Inc. (US Postmaster: Address changes should be sent to New Statesman, Speedimpex USA Inc., 45-45 39th Street, Long Island City, NY 11104)

Unsolicited manuscripts and artwork will only be returned if an SAE is enclosed.

This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed. (On postcards please.)

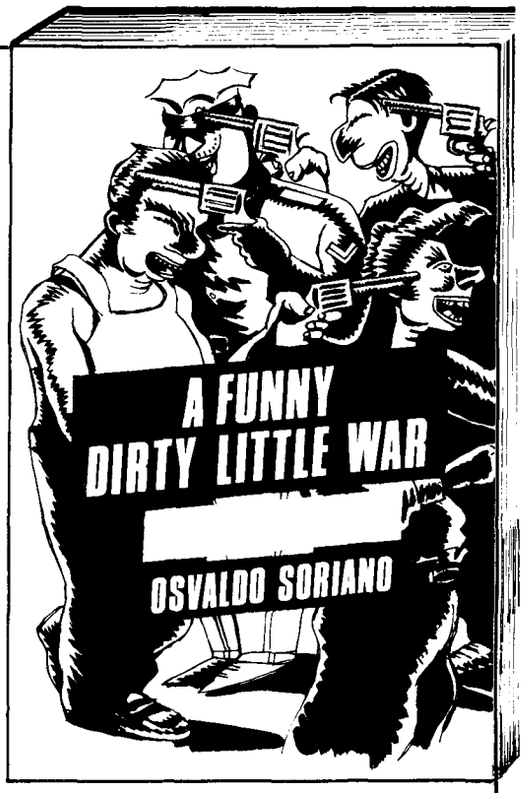
☐ A couple of weeks ago the SP carried a story about 'Lord Mustard' back busking on the streets of his native Glasgow. Mustard is normally to be found outside Harrods. Before returning South, he asked for a copy of the paper to be sent to his London address: Lord Mustard, c/o Number Six Door, Harrods, Knightsbridge. Alas, the paper was delivered by mistake to the House of Lords. It came back last week marked 'Not known at this address'. — *The Sunday Post* (George Moor)

☐ 'It's a game which depends far more on psychological than physiological warfare. . . Part of our warm-up includes a lengthy bout of primal screaming. That really terrified the opponents.' They scream in the dressing-room, within earshot of the other team's dressing-room. When the teams come out Oxford skates round their section of ice as fast as they can, simultaneously fixing their opponents with savage glares. The chanting takes place just before play starts. — *Observer* (Rachel M. Simpson)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS THAT MATTER

Readers International brings you today's world literature. Each hardcover volume, by subscription, is just £4.50. (regularly to £9.95)



'*YOU GOT INFILTRATORS*'—from the first comic yet chilling threat in *A Funny Dirty Little War*, a quiet town near Buenos Aires lurches toward a bizarre, farcical battle. From Argentina, today's crucible for change in Latin America, comes Osvaldo Soriano's unforgettable parable on Peronism and on the ideology of violence. 'The black humor, dizzying action, crisp, keen dialogue make gripping reading,' writes Italo Calvino: '*A Funny Dirty Little War* places Osvaldo Soriano in a completely distinctive line from that of other Latin American writers.'

Marta Traba's *Mothers and Shadows* is a psychological thriller focusing on a middle-aged seductress and a young woman on the run in Montevideo. Both are mothers—one fears for her grown son, 'missing' in Pinochet's Chile; the other has lost her unborn child under torture. Their intense meeting and growing friendship, their memories and grief evoke the passion, the strength of those Latin American women who defy state terror and refuse the lie that their loved ones have simply 'disappeared'. 'Fierce, intelligent, moving', says *El Tiempo* of Bogotá.

From the black South African townships comes Njabulo Ndebele's *Fools and Other Stories*, winner of Africa's highest literary award. 'Our literature,' says Ndebele, 'ought to move away from an easy preoccupation with oppression. It exists. The task is to explore how and why people can survive under such harsh conditions.'

These and other ground-breaking contemporary works are available now by subscription in exceptional English translations through Readers International (RI).

Says *In These Times* (Chicago): 'Like a magazine subscription, it's a gamble—but it could be more than worth it, for its introduction to worlds we might never have known existed.'

'*A splendid and important enterprise and worth supporting*,' says London's Financial Times.

Thousands of RI subscribers now receive a new book every two months: Hardcover editions at the special price of £4.50 each, plus 50p each for postage. (Regular prices to £9.95)

SUBSCRIBE NOW for a *good read* every two months and help bring some of today's most gifted writers into English. Says A. Whitney Ellsworth, Publisher of the *New York Review of Books*: 'Readers International is exciting: Good books—and a good cause.' Return the coupon to receive your first volume.

ALREADY LAUNCHED by readers like you: Antonio Skarmeta's *I Dreamt the Snow Was Burning*, 'the most accomplished piece of literature to come out of Chile since Pinochet took power'—Village Voice; *Awaiting Trespass* by Linda Ty-Casper (Philippines), 'jabs so deft they avoid the didactic but sting mightily' says NY Times Bk Rev; Sergio Ramírez' *To Bury Our Fathers* (Nicaragua), 'very funny, very human, a must for any student of Latin America'—Punch. *My Merry Mornings* by Ivan Klíma, 'charming and comic stories about Prague, irrepressibly cheerful and successfully written'—Financial Times.

READERS INTERNATIONAL
8 Strathray Gardens, London NW3 4NY

Please begin my subscription to RI's 1986 series with *A Funny Dirty Little War* at the £4.50 subscriber price plus 50p for postage. Send RI's latest book at the same price every other month. At any time I may cancel simply by writing you.

NAME

ADDRESS

TOWN CODE COUNTRY

☐ £5.00 (£6 overseas) to Readers International is enclosed. (US subscribers, please send $8.95, incl postage, to RI Subscriber Service Dept, PO Box 959, Columbia, LA 71418. Canadian subscribers, please send Can. $9.95, incl postage, to RI, 570 Victoria Ave., Westmount PQ, Montreal H3Y 2R6.)

SPECIAL SAVINGS: Prepay a year's subscription for six books at just £3.50 per book plus 50p postage. ☐ I enclose my payment for £24.00 inland, US$42. Can$49. £30 sterling elsewhere ST8

HOW **RI** SELECTS BOOKS: Literary merit is the first consideration of RI's editors and advisors. Many of these works were initially banned at home or written in exile: **RI** is committed to publishing literature in danger. Each is current, from the past 10 years. Each is new to readers here—although many have been acclaimed in European editions. Subscribe now and give these powerful writers a voice in English, all at a very modest price.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED